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Understanding the Messiah: The Rhetoric of Perception in Luke-Acts

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Abstract

This thesis argues that the rhetoric of perception opens and closes the Gospel of Luke and its sequel, the Acts of the Apostles, and occurs throughout both narratives as a central plot device. The epistemological theme created by this involves how characters understand the major events of the narrative, especially what seems to be a central element: Jesus' identity as the Messiah and the scriptural necessity of his suffering and resurrection. The suspense created by the rhetoric of perception allows the author to both communicate key tenets of his theology, as well as offer the audience a model for accomplishing the purpose of his writing, to 'recognise the certainty' of his story (Luke 1:1–4).

In the Gospel of Luke, suspense is created by the juxtaposition of divine revelation to the disciples and the divine concealment that produces their misunderstanding. This conflict reaches its resolution in the Gospel's final scenes, in which Jesus opens the mind of the disciples to understand the Scriptures, enabling them to understand what was earlier concealed, the scriptural necessity of the Messiah's death and resurrection. In Acts, the conflict of misunderstanding is no longer primarily internal to the disciples but external: It is a characteristic of those who do not believe, those to whom the disciples-turned-apostles preach, and it must be overcome through the repentance and belief of the hearers. The resolution provided by the conclusion of Acts is much more negative than that of the Gospel: In the Empire's capital city, far from that place of illumination where the disciples earlier came to understanding, the proclamation of the gospel is essentially rejected by a Jewish audience to whom is applied the description of Isaiah 6:9–10, rich in its epistemological metaphor.

Signed Declaration

I hereby affirm that I have composed this thesis and that the work is my own. The work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Joshua L. Mann

Date

Morning by morning

Walking in the shadow of Castle Rock

Ascending the Mound

That I might be found

Worthy when I sit in the Dock

— Inspired by the walk from
Stockbridge to New College in Edinburgh

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABG	Arbeiten zur Bibel und ihrer Geschichte
ACNT	Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentary
BDAG	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000 (Danker-Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich).
BDF	Blass, Friedrich, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>CBR</i>	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CGTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary
<i>CurTM</i>	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
ESEC	Emory Studies in Early Christianity
<i>ExpT</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JPTSS	Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series
<i>JSBLE</i>	<i>Journal for the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSupp	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
<i>LA</i>	<i>Liber annuus</i>

LCBI	Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation
LCL	The Loeb Classical Library
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
NA28	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 28th ed.
NAC	New American Commentary
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTL	New Testament Library
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
NTSI	New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
SBG	Studies in Biblical Greek
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
TLNT	Spicq, Ceslas. <i>Theological Lexicon of the New Testament</i> . Translated by James D. Ernest. 3 vols. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994.
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>ZKT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

1 Research Question, Context, and Approach

One of the key conflicts in the plot of Luke-Acts has to do with how characters come to or fail to understand what is, according to the author, the scriptural necessity of Jesus' death and resurrection as the Messiah (e.g., Luke 24:44–49). At key moments in the narrative, understanding related to this is withheld from characters (e.g., Luke 9:45; 18:34; 19:42; cf. 24:16; Acts 28:25–26). At other key moments, understanding appears to be supernaturally granted (e.g., Luke 24:45; Acts 16:14; cf. Luke 8:10; 10:21–24; 24:31–32). Passages about the perception of Jesus and his message appear at the beginning and end of each book and shape the plot in significant ways. The repetition of these passages and their effect on the audience might be called 'the rhetoric of perception'.¹ This thesis therefore seeks to answer the question, *How does the rhetoric of perception contribute to the meaning of Luke-Acts?* To clarify the suitability of this question, attention will first be given to what seems to be the most obvious evidence of the importance of the rhetoric of perception in the narrative.

1.1 Observations Giving Rise to the Question

The opening lines of the Gospel of Luke, well known for their Greek style and aesthetic appeal, do more than present to the audience the method and purpose of the author, Luke.² The preface introduces an important theme that will be carefully

¹ John A. Darr has used this phrase in much of his work on Luke-Acts, defining it as "how readers are persuaded to become ideal witnesses of 'the things that have been fulfilled' [Luke 1:4]" (*On Character Building: The Reader and the Rhetoric of Characterization in Luke-Acts*, LCBI [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992], 147). What I mean by "perception" will be addressed briefly below.

² I use the traditional name "Luke" for convenience. Also note the masculine participle in the preface indicates the maleness of the implied author, if not the real one.

developed throughout the story—a theme that opens and closes not only the first narrative, the Gospel of Luke, but its sequel, the Acts of the Apostles.³ The theme is epistemological, dealing with how characters understand the major events of the narrative, especially what seems to be a central message: Jesus’ identity as the Messiah and the scriptural necessity of his suffering and resurrection, and the mission of proclaiming repentance in his name. The theme is also dialectical, including concealment, confusion, and misunderstanding on the one hand, and understanding, revelation, and illumination on the other. It is connected to the main characters, to significant recurring conflict and its resolution, and thus, it is integral to the development of the plot of both narratives. The prominent threads of the theme will be briefly traced now.

In the Gospel, the disciples, who are granted to know the ‘mysteries of the kingdom of God’ (Luke 8:10), nevertheless fail to understand Jesus’ passion along side of his identification as the Messiah (Luke 9:20, 22, 44–45; 18:31–34; 24:11, 37, 41). This conflict is complicated by the concealment of meaning concerning Jesus’ passion predictions (Luke 9:45; 18:34; cf. 8:10; 19:42; 24:16). The cognitive barrier to the disciples’ understanding persists along the story’s travel narrative, the journey to Jerusalem (roughly Luke 9–19), but it is finally overcome in the conclusion of the Gospel: Jesus, expounding on the Scriptures, ‘opens [the disciples’] mind to understand the Scriptures’ (24:45)—to understand that the Scriptures bear witness to Jesus’ identity as the Messiah who must suffer and be raised, and that repentance

³ Following the majority of Lukan scholars, I will read Luke and Acts together, each narrative in the light of the other, assuming a moderate view of the unity of Luke and Acts (see further below). For issues related to the (dis)unity of Luke-Acts, see Mikeal C. Parsons and Richard I. Pervo, *Rethinking the Unity of Luke and Acts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Andrew F. Gregory and C. Kevin Rowe, eds., *Rethinking the Unity and Reception of Luke and Acts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010); John Darr has likewise observed that perception language is found in the preface of Luke and the end of Acts (*Herod the Fox: Audience Criticism and Lukan Characterization*, JSNTSup 163 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 86–87).

must be preached to the nations (Luke 24:44–49).⁴ The story ends with Jesus ascending and the disciples worshipping, returning to the temple, and praising God (Luke 24:50–53).

The second narrative, Acts, begins by recapitulating Jesus’ final days before the ascension: after sitting under Jesus’ teaching concerning ‘the kingdom of God’ for forty days (Acts 1:3), the disciples appear uncertain about the timing of the restoration of the kingdom and question Jesus concerning it (Acts 1:6; cf. 1:11; Luke 24:4–7).⁵ Jesus answers by repeating his instruction to be his witnesses when the Spirit comes to empower the proclamation of the kingdom message (Acts 1:8; cf. Acts 2:1–13; 14–36; 28:23, 30–31). From Pentecost forward, ignorance is no longer a conflict primarily *internal* to the disciples but *external*: It is a characteristic of those who do not believe, those to whom these disciples-turned-apostles must preach, and it must be overcome through repentance and belief of the hearers (Acts 2:36, 38; 3:17, 19; 17:30; 28:24–27).⁶

Along this line, Peter proclaims at Pentecost, “Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36).⁷ Peter exhorts his hearers to ‘know *for certain*’ (ἀσφαλῶς...γινωσκέτω), which is strikingly similar to the stated purpose with which Luke opens the Gospel narrative: “...in order that you might *recognise the certainty*

⁴ Joshua L. Mann, “What Is Opened in Luke 24:45, the Mind or the Scriptures?,” *JBL* 135.4 (2016): 799–806.

⁵ Cf. Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 41.

⁶ Cf. Joel B. Green, “Learning Theological Interpretation from Luke,” in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation* (vol. 6; Scripture & Hermeneutics; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 71–72.

⁷ All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

of the things you have been instructed” (ἐπιγνώσ...την ἀσφάλειαν) (Luke 1:4).⁸

Luke’s aim is met by the ideal reader; Peter’s aim is met by those characters in the story who respond in repentance and faith (e.g., Acts 2:41). Yet throughout the narrative of Acts, even to its very end, the response of characters to the proclamation is mixed: Many overcome ignorance and repent, believe, and receive the Spirit. Many do not, and perhaps most strikingly, many among the Jews reject the apostles’ message. The resolution provided by the conclusion of Acts is distinctly more negative than that of the Gospel: In the Empire’s capital city, far from that place of original illumination, ascension, and worship, the proclamation of the gospel is essentially rejected by an audience to whom is applied the description of Isaiah 6:9–10, rich in its epistemological metaphor (Acts 28:25–27; cf. Luke 8:10). In spite of the rejection by certain Jews in Rome, the message of the kingdom continues to be proclaimed with “boldness, unhindered” (Acts 28:31), but now with a special focus on Gentile hearers (28:28). The rhetoric of perception in the narrative thus presents ignorance and unbelief as *reproachable*, *reversible*, and in any case *part* of the divine plan revealed in the Scriptures—ideas that will be further unpacked in the course of this analysis.

1.2 Previous Research on the Rhetoric of Perception in Luke-Acts

In 1994 John Darr could say, “Luke’s rhetoric of perception is so ubiquitous, various and nuanced that it cannot be adequately treated in a single study or through a single approach. One is forced, therefore, to get at it bit by bit, topic by topic, passage by

⁸ Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *The Moment of Recognition: Luke as Story-Teller* (London: The Athlone Press, 1978), 13.

passage, as critics have begun to do...”.⁹ In the pages that follow, Darr’s observations will be confirmed with one exception: If this thesis is successful, it *will* adequately treat the rhetoric of perception as a single, sustained study.

As Darr observed, critics had ‘begun’ to ‘get at’ the rhetoric of perception, and in the two decades since his observation, a handful of (mostly) short studies on or related to the subject have appeared, none of which treat the theme comprehensively.¹⁰ Some scholars have made suggestive, if brief, observations about the significance of perception in Luke-Acts. For example, recently Richard Hays has taken Luke 24 (and the Emmaus episode in particular) as a primary example illustrating his book’s main hermeneutical thesis, that the Evangelists ‘read backwards’ (i.e., read their Scriptures through the lens of christology). He cites the climactic illumination scene in Luke 24:45 for support, implying its importance, yet offers little on its connection to concealment and illumination throughout Luke-Acts—a connection that might support his more general hermeneutical point.¹¹ To take an older example, Henry Cadbury could say of Luke, as a kind of theological aside:

...The author’s verbs are definite and striking. Many are compounds of *πρό*, “in advance”: foreknow, foreordain, foredoom, fore-announce, fore-appoint, foresee. God has set a day, he has elected the witnesses, he has fixed upon the

⁹ John A. Darr, “‘Watch How You Listen’ (Luke 8.18): Jesus and the Rhetoric of Perception in Luke-Acts,” in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament*, ed. Edgar V. McKnight and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 87.

¹⁰ Indeed, the situation John Darr described in 1992 has not changed: “Although some scholars have noted Luke’s stress on seeing and hearing..., the ubiquity and import of his ‘rhetoric of perception’ has yet to be fully appreciated or understood within the Lukan studies guild” (*On Character Building*, 182 n. 22); A few years later, Darr could say much the same thing (*Herod the Fox*, 84 n. 62); John B. F. Miller has recently made a similar point about studies related (broadly) to perception: “Coming to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the divine and the human is of crucial importance for biblical theology. Although some studies have illuminated certain aspects of this issue, to my knowledge there has yet to be an extensive examination of this question” (“*Convinced That God Had Called Us*”: *Dreams, Visions, and the Perception of God’s Will in Luke-Acts*, *BibInt* 85 [Leiden: Brill, 2007], 243).

¹¹ Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 13ff.

judge, he has appointed the way. Those who believed had already been “ordained to eternal life,” the Lord had “opened their heart,” or “called” them.¹²

Others have struck a bit closer in studies of motifs related to perception, such as sight and blindness, light and darkness, or misunderstanding, usually in shorter pieces or as small parts of larger studies.¹³ A few others, still, have contributed in ways more directly related to the theme of perception—works summarised below by date in order to better situate this thesis and highlight the need for further research.

Perhaps the most concise work is Geoffrey Nuttall’s published lecture which briefly articulates the epistemological interest of the Third Gospel: “The dialectic of men’s ignorance and knowledge, of their blindness and the moment of recognition, seems to have fascinated Luke.”¹⁴ Although his treatment is brief (just 16 pages) and does not sufficiently interact with contemporary Lukan scholarship, Nuttall is able to highlight a few important instances in which characters come to understand a particular truth. He also suggests that the theme of illumination is found in the preface of Luke and continues in the narrative of Acts:

But now, Peter declares in an early sermon, ‘Let all the house of Israel know for certain...’: a phrase which carries us back to the dedication of the gospel to Theophilus, and to Luke’s announcement of its purpose. Proclamation, revelation, epiphany: homiletics, epistemology, the language of worship: from the question ‘Who is he?’ to the moment of recognition the routes are various, but the apologetic is unchanging.¹⁵

¹² Henry J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 304–5.

¹³ E.g., Dennis Hamm, “Sight to the Blind: Vision as Metaphor in Luke,” *Biblica* 67.4 (1986): 457–477; Susan R. Garrett, “‘Lest the Light in You Be Darkness’: Luke 11:33–36 and the Question of Commitment,” *JBL* 110.1 (1991): 93–105; R. Alan Culpepper, “Seeing the Kingdom of God: The Metaphor of Sight in the Gospel of Luke,” *CurTM* 21 (1994): 434–43; Chad Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts: The Use of Physical Features in Characterization*, *BibInt* 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2008); James M. Morgan, “How do Motifs Endure and Perform? Motif Theory for the Study of Biblical Narratives,” *RB* 122.2 (2015): 194–216; Brittany E. Wilson, “Hearing the Word and Seeing the Light: Voice and Vision in Acts,” *JSNT* 38.4 (2016): 456–81.

¹⁴ Nuttall, *Moment*, 13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

While Nuttall's lecture is far too brief to properly establish the significance of this theme in the narratives of Luke-Acts, it supports taking the inquiry further.

In a thorough study of Luke 24, Richard Dillon has perhaps offered as much as any other author on the specific theme of illumination in the Gospel of Luke.¹⁶ His major exegetical argument is that the Lukan *Leidensmysterium* (or 'passion mystery')¹⁷ remains unresolved until the revelatory action of the risen Christ in Luke 24, which depicts "...Easter revelation as the *pure gift* of God, conveyed only through the personal presence and conclusive *word of the risen Christ*."¹⁸ This revelatory experience transforms disciples from 'eye-witnesses' to 'ministers of the word'.¹⁹ Dillon's careful exegesis, especially concerning the final narratives of the Gospel, is generally supportive of the study proposed here. However, his focus on Luke 24 and the theme of illumination does not fully address the concealment of knowledge and connections of Luke 24 with other relevant passages in the Third Gospel, not to mention Acts. Dillon's work will be most closely engaged in the analysis of Luke 24, below.

Although many Lukan commentators do not elaborate on the tensions apparent in Luke's depiction of perception, Jack Dean Kingsbury offers an exception

¹⁶ Richard J. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word: Tradition and Composition in Luke 24*, AnBib 82 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978); Richard J. Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1-4)," *CBQ* 43.2 (1981): 205-27.

¹⁷ Here and elsewhere, Dillon draws on the language from William Wrede's *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (1901). Wrede's focus is on Mark's secrecy motif, but he compares how Matthew and Luke, respectively, take up or modify the theme (*The Messianic Secret*, trans. J. C. G. Greig [Cambridge/London: James Clarke, 1971], 164-80). Like Dillon, Wrede finds "divine intention" in Luke's concealment passages (9:45; 18:34) (esp. 168), although Wrede also claims that the disciples' historically conditioned false messianic expectations "closes their minds" (171). Wrede's observations on Luke, though brief, are supportive of this thesis.

¹⁸ Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, ix, italics original.

¹⁹ Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1-4)"; Cf. Karl A. Kuhn, who, relying on the framework of Dillon's thesis, modifies it: Instead of a grand finale at the end of Luke 24 in which Easter faith finally arrives in fullness and transforms the disciples, Luke 24 portrays the move from misunderstanding to understanding and witness—a move which is experienced by characters throughout the narrative ("Beginning the Witness: The Αὐτόπται Καὶ Ὑπηρέται of Luke's Infancy Narrative," *NTS* 49.2 [2003]: 237-55).

in his *Conflict in Luke*. He notes that the disciples are portrayed as often having a mistaken ‘human, this-worldly perspective’, noting further, “Not until the disciples comprehend the saving purposes that God brings to realization in Jesus will they be in any position to be Jesus’ witnesses and to undertake the worldwide ministry he has in store for them (24:44–49).”²⁰ Luke’s narrative later shows that the disciples’ lack of understanding is in part the intention of God, though Luke does not absolve the disciples of culpability. The disciples’ misunderstanding changes in the resurrection narrative in which “...gradually incomprehension gives way to enlightenment and spiritual maturity.”²¹ Still, there remains an antithesis between this ‘human point of view’ and ‘resurrection faith’.²² The end of the narrative is seen as a climactic confirmation of a true understanding of who Jesus is. In this way Kingsbury touches on both the ignorance and the illumination. However, he does not trace the development of the rhetoric of perception throughout the narrative of Luke’s Gospel, and he leaves Acts largely unexplored.

In a suggestive article, Brigid Frein examines the recurrence of misunderstanding in the Gospel of Luke.²³ She successfully identifies a number of instances of misunderstanding, considers the nature of misunderstanding in those instances, and brings out a few theological ramifications in view of her observations. She looks at examples where “...characters incorrectly understand Jesus’ words or those of an inspired messenger” and passages that “...indicate that they do not

²⁰ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Luke: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 110.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 132.

²² *Ibid.*, 133.

²³ Brigid Curtin Frein, “The Literary and Theological Significance of Misunderstanding in the Gospel of Luke,” *Bib* 74.3 (1993): 328–48.

understand or perceive at all.”²⁴ Frein is able to show ways in which Luke edits his sources to emphasise misunderstanding, and she helpfully discusses the literary payoff of the theme. For example, she rightly suggests that Luke uses characters’ misunderstanding of Jesus to develop Jesus’ character.²⁵ Relatedly, this allows Luke to develop his christology, a major point on which this thesis agrees.²⁶ Frein sees the conflict of misunderstanding finally resolved in 24:52, concluding in words reminiscent of Dillon: “...it is impossible to grasp the meaning of true discipleship apart from the recognition of the risen and exalted Lord.”²⁷ In the end, Frein is able to show that the recurrence of misunderstanding in the Gospel suggests an important theme with theological implications, and she touches on many of the threads central to the rhetoric of perception examined below. However, given the scope of an article, Frein does not unravel the nature of the concealment of knowledge in Luke, nor does she give attention to the narrative of Acts.

John Darr, who helpfully introduced the discussion above, has looked at the rhetoric of perception in a number of publications, typically by way of an examination of characterisation in the Gospel of Luke.²⁸ Darr maintains that Luke’s characters ‘model perceptual options for the reader’, and thereby that “...the reader is *shown* correct and incorrect examples of seeing and hearing...”²⁹ He further examines the characterisation of the Pharisees and Herod in respective publications, showing various ways they relate to the theme of perception.³⁰ In one short related

²⁴ Ibid., 328.

²⁵ Ibid., 340.

²⁶ Ibid., 347.

²⁷ Ibid., 345.

²⁸ Darr, *On Character Building*; Darr, “Watch How You Listen”; Darr, *Herod the Fox*; John A. Darr, “Narrative Therapy: Treating Audience Anxiety through Psychagogy in Luke,” *PRSt* 39.4 (2012): 335–348.

²⁹ Darr, “Watch How You Listen,” 87.

³⁰ Darr, *On Character Building*; *Herod the Fox*.

study, he explores the theme of perception in Jesus' 'Nazareth Sermon' (Luke 4:16–30) and 'The Parable of the Sower' (Luke 8:4–21), arguing that in reference to Jesus' speech, "...a fully authorized voice *tells* the reader when, where or how to look and listen."³¹ Thus in these works Darr engages in a reader-oriented narrative criticism and compellingly suggests ways in which one might understand characters as models of (mis)perception in the narrative. Although Darr has only examined perception language in some select passages and primarily through the lens of the characterisation of the Pharisees and Herod, his numerous insights will be incorporated throughout this thesis. He also offers a compelling example of how to move from the theme of perception to its intended effect (i.e., its *rhetoric*) in the scope of Luke-Acts.

In a book that analyses repentance and conversion in Luke-Acts in the light of cognitive science, Joel Green offers the characterisation of the apostle Peter as a key to understanding Luke's theology of conversion.³² In his discussion of Peter's 'miscomprehension' of Jesus, Green rejects readings of Luke 9:45 and 18:34 that suggest that "...God must have prevented the disciples from understanding Jesus's words" in light of other passages which suggest the disciples *should* in fact understand (e.g., 8:10; 9:44; 10:23).³³ Similarly, Green, following Jens-W. Taeger, says, "Crucially, the primary obstacle that must be overcome as God restores his people, and as both Jews and Gentiles are called to transfer their allegiances over to him, is 'ignorance'," and further that "...the resolution of 'ignorance' is not simply

³¹ Darr, "Watch How You Listen," 87–88.

³² Joel B. Green, *Conversion in Luke-Acts: Divine Action, Human Cognition, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015).

³³ *Ibid.*, 92; This section (91–99) includes lightly revised material from an essay that primarily seeks to establish a paradigm for theological interpretation using Luke as a model (Green, "Learning," 55–78).

‘the amassing of facts’, but a realignment with God’s ancient purpose, now coming to fruition (that is, ‘repentance’) and divine forgiveness.”³⁴ Green rightly sees the disciples’ failure to comprehend resolved in the end of the narrative (at Luke 24:45). He then explains their earlier ‘perplexity’ as follows: “Simply put, the disciples lack the conceptual equipment necessary to link what Jesus holds together in his passion predictions, namely, his exalted status and impending dishonour.”³⁵ He further says, “The disciples are in the dark, so to speak, because they lack the necessary cognitive categories, the required patterns of thought.”³⁶ Green might be too eager to resolve the narrative tension between the culpability of the disciples for their failure and the straightforward readings of passages that suggest God’s involvement in concealment.³⁷ Nevertheless, Green’s discussion confirms the significance of perception in Luke-Acts, as well as its connection to other significant concepts such as conversion and repentance.³⁸

In a relatively recent publication, Martin Bauspieß seeks to challenge the modern conception of the relationship between knowledge and history in Luke-Acts, suggesting that Luke’s narrative does not attempt to promote knowledge or certainty concerning the events he narrates by historicising those events.³⁹ Rather, if Luke’s conception of history and knowledge can be derived from the narrative itself—a

³⁴ Green, “Learning,” 71–72; cf. Jens-W. Taeger, *Der Mensch und sein Heil*, Studien zum Bild des Menschen und zur Sicht der Bekehrung bei Lukas (Gütersloh: G. Mohn, 1982).

³⁵ Green, *Conversion*, 93.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 93–94.

³⁷ Green’s argument will be critically engaged most fully in the section on Luke 9:43–45, below.

³⁸ With Green, Kevin Rowe (apparently independently) agrees that Acts connects ignorance with the need for repentance (C. Kevin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009], esp. 170). Interestingly, Rowe makes a number of suggestive comments that support the inquiry of this thesis (e.g., 137, 156, 162 n. 48, 170). However, since Rowe’s focus is elsewhere, he does not examine the extent of epistemological language in Acts. Further, Luke’s Gospel falls largely outside the scope of his inquiry.

³⁹ “Das Kerygma von Jesus wird im dritten Evangelium keinesweges ‘historisiert’.” Martin Bauspieß, *Geschichte Und Erkenntnis Im Lukanischen Doppelwerk: Eine Exegetische Untersuchung Zu Einer Christlichen Perspektive Auf Geschichte*, ABG 42 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2012), 355.

major assumption upon which Bauspieß depends—then the sort of knowledge that Luke hopes his readers gain (Luke 1:4) is a kind of believing consent (“glaubende Zustimmung”) derived only when past events are properly *interpreted*.⁴⁰ The Emmaus narrative (Luke 24) becomes a primary example: The two disciples have knowledge of recent events, but they do not understand the significance of these events until Christ himself discloses it to them and explains the Scriptures. Likewise, in Acts, the preaching of witnesses becomes a primary means through which such understanding is obtained. Bauspieß’s volume ultimately aims to derive a Christian perspective on history from the example of Luke, and while his focus is not on perception as such, his observations in that regard support the direction of this thesis.⁴¹

In summary, a number of publications demonstrate that the narratives of Luke-Acts betray a strong interest in perception, broadly understood. Some of these works also recognise the significance of the final episodes in the Gospel, especially the final illumination of the disciples in Luke 24:45. One limitation of these studies is the tendency to focus on either Luke or Acts (or a few select passages from each), or to give attention to just one aspect of perception. What remains to be done—and what will be attempted in the pages that follow—is a more thorough investigation of how the rhetoric of perception unfolds *throughout* Luke-Acts.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 246; cf. Cadbury, *Making*, 304–5: “[Peter and Paul’s] conversion is not merely the present visitation but the long-standing purpose of God, ‘who maketh these things known from of old.’ Both by its analysis of the career of Jesus and by its emphasis upon the conformity to divine schedule of its own story of preaching in Jesus’ name, with its divergent outcome of success and failure, the Book of Acts, especially in its speeches, probably reveals an integral part of the author’s own philosophy of history which he intended his history to substantiate.”

⁴¹ Though apparently unaware of the piece by Green (“Learning”), mentioned above, Bauspieß entertains similar questions.

1.3 Methodology

The approach taken here to the text of Luke-Acts is known in biblical studies as *narrative criticism*, succinctly described by Stephen Moore as an “...analysis that is attuned to plot, characterization, and other constitutive features of narrative.”⁴²

Narrative criticism enjoys broad use in New Testament studies, and it has been relatively stable in its application for decades.⁴³ It is also a method well suited to answering the research question earlier proposed as it is able to not only elucidate the epistemological theme introduced above, but it also provides a theoretical basis for considering how a theme functions in the narrative. Narrative criticism “...focuses on how biblical literature works as *literature*. The ‘what’ of a text (its content) and the ‘how’ of a text (its rhetoric and structure) are analyzed as a complete tapestry, an organic whole.”⁴⁴ Luke-Acts can thus be examined as a self-contained ‘story world’, focusing on the interplay of narrative features such as narrator, setting, plot, character, and rhetoric.⁴⁵ The narrative critic may therefore set aside questions of *historicity* (though not all historical inquiry) in order to focus on how the narrative functions as a story and how its elements are *signified*. As Joel Green explains:

There is something provocative and suggestive, then, about Wolfgang Iser’s observation that, in narrative, the referent of the work of mimesis has shifted from “the world out there” to “perception of the world out there.” As a result, the pressing question becomes, on the microlevel: How is this event related causally to that one? And, on the macrolevel: What end is served by narrating the story in this way (rather than some other)? The task of a narrative-critical

⁴² Stephen D. Moore, “Biblical Narrative Analysis from the New Criticism to the New Narratology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 27.

⁴³ Moore says, “...biblical literary criticism has, by and large and relative to the often radical options on offer from the extrabiblical field of literary studies, long been a moderate, middle-of-the-road enterprise” (ibid., 32).

⁴⁴ James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 18–19.

⁴⁵ Cf. David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 5–8.

reading of the Gospels and Acts thus locates itself less in relation to concerns with validation and more in terms of signification.⁴⁶

This thesis is primarily interested in *signification*, especially in understanding how the rhetoric of perception unfolds in the narrative and what effect it has on the implied audience.

Although narrative criticism is not primarily interested in historical inquiry, it will be applied here in a historically-informed manner.⁴⁷ Luke and Acts are narratives arising out of an ancient historical context, written in an ancient language, addressing an audience living in an ancient culture.⁴⁸ The world of the story is set in the first century, and this thesis will employ the historical-critical method to understand that world, and so better understand the story.⁴⁹ The preface of Luke itself invites questions about parallel traditions, sources, and teachings, and may suggest that the audience is to some extent already familiar with the story (Luke 1:1–4).⁵⁰ It cannot be determined whether or not the original audience was familiar with these narratives, nor whether it thought Luke had—according to broad scholarly consensus today—thoroughly used material from another (Mark’s) Gospel and other similar written sources. Nevertheless, given both modern compelling arguments for Luke’s extensive use of Mark, and the probability that the implied audience has knowledge of similar traditions as those narrated in the Third Gospel, this study will

⁴⁶ Joel B. Green, “Narrative Criticism,” in *Methods for Luke*, ed. Joel B. Green, *Methods in Biblical Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 88.

⁴⁷ Joel Green’s scholarship is a good example of this; cf. Green, “Narrative Criticism.”

⁴⁸ I will assume an audience living around the time of the composition of Luke-Acts during the late first century, after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

⁴⁹ As Green, “Narrative Criticism,” 89. At certain points, brief discussion of textual-critical issues will be undertaken where certain variant readings potentially alter my narrative reading.

⁵⁰ The degree of familiarity cannot, of course, be known. One of the difficulties in interpreting Luke’s preface is deciding if and to what extent the audience is represented by Theophilus, the narratee. In any case, it seems reasonable to assume a broader audience that, like Theophilus, has received instruction concerning the traditions written in the story (Luke 1:4). For a discussion of the issue from a narrative-critical perspective, see Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 35, 42–45.

consider how Luke appears to have shaped his source material as evidence of key themes. It is also recognised that the use of epistemological motifs such as ignorance and illumination, recognition scenes (e.g., Luke 24:13–33), and physiognomy have literary precedent.⁵¹

While narrative criticism is often understood as theoretically text-oriented, the application of narrative criticism by individual scholars tends toward one of three orientations, as observed by Mark Allan Powell: author-oriented, text-oriented, and reader-oriented.⁵² In Powell’s scheme, this thesis fits within the text-orientation in that “...the response attributable to the implied reader is not valued because it serves as an index for recovering authorial intent [as with author-oriented]...or as a springboard for understanding polyvalence [as with reader-oriented]...but because it *is* what the text means.”⁵³ But note that the lines between these orientations are heuristic, not absolute. Thus while this thesis focuses on the text of Luke-Acts, it will also explore the rhetorical effects of the narrative on an implied audience, a move that is sometimes construed as reader-oriented or reader-response narrative criticism.⁵⁴

Narrative criticism enables an investigation of the intentions of the implied author and how it is the narrative shapes the ‘ideal’ audience, while avoiding the problematic issues of determining the *real* author’s intentions or the *real* audience’s

⁵¹ That is to say, other ancient narratives use and develop similar themes. Physiognomy in narratives refers to the characterisation of a person using stereotypes based on physical features. Cf. Mikeal C. Parsons, *Body and Character in Luke and Acts: The Subversion of Physiognomy in Early Christianity* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011); Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness*.

⁵² Mark Allan Powell, “Narrative Criticism: The Emergence of a Prominent Reading Strategy,” in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 26–42.

⁵³ Ibid., 33. Powell places many prominent narrative critics into this category, as well, including Culpepper, Kingsbury, Rhoads, Dewey, Michie, and Tannehill.

⁵⁴ Cf. Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation: The Gospel According to Luke* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986), 3–4; another good example is found in Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 83–89.

situation.⁵⁵ As such, it is interested in more than observing literary creativity: “To shape the identity of their audiences, to legitimize a movement, and to demonstrate continuity with the past—such aims as these characterize these texts [the Gospels and Acts], whose character then must be understood in rhetorical terms, as acts of persuasion, and not simply with regard to literary artistry.”⁵⁶ Rhetoric, as it applies to narrative criticism, refers to “the way in which an author writes so as to create certain effects on the [ideal] readers.”⁵⁷ These effects are discernable through a careful analysis of the narrative which itself *implies* the kind of reader in which such effects are produced. These ideal readers will typically be called the ‘audience’ in the study that follows except in instances that call for further delineation. Narrative criticism provides the interpretative framework with which to study how seemingly unconnected passages that are thematically similar can function together to have a *rhetorical effect* upon the audience. When the narrative is communicated, the audience may be led in discernable ways to make connections in the narrative that are not explicitly formulated therein. Kelly Iverson, relying methodologically on Wolfgang Iser, observes this when he examines the ‘secrecy’ theme in Mark’s Gospel:

Iser’s differentiation between that which is in the text and that which is formulated by the text is important, since commentators rarely consider the possibility that Markan secrecy includes subthemes that are not explicitly related *in the narrative*, yet function as coherent themes *beyond the narrative* (i.e., in terms of rhetorical impact). ...Moreover, the consistent element of secrecy, displayed in all its manifold forms throughout the Gospel, is quite

⁵⁵ Narrative critics use various terms related to the implied audience of a narrative. When the adjective ‘ideal’ or ‘model’ is applied to the word ‘audience’ or ‘reader’, it typically refers to an audience that realises the intentions and purposes of the narrative (and implied author); cf. Green, “Learning,” in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation*, 56, 58–61; Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark*, 138–39.

⁵⁶ Green, “Narrative Criticism,” 91; cf. Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark*, 137–52.

⁵⁷ Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, *Mark*, 137.

possibly the catalyst for the creation of “something that is unformulated in the text, and yet represents its ‘intention’.”⁵⁸

In Luke and Acts, epistemological motifs such as sight, blindness, light, and darkness are discernable in a number of passages. It will be argued that these passages work together to develop the plot, to express Luke’s theology, and to impact the audience in accordance with the stated purpose of Luke 1:4, to bring about a kind of ‘knowing with certainty’.⁵⁹

In spite of the fact that *plot* and its constitutive elements are universally recognised properties of a narrative, it would be useful to briefly define them. A good starting point is James Resseguie’s formulation of a familiar minimalist concept of *plot*: “the sequence of events or incidents that make up a narrative.”⁶⁰ To this should be added the significance of the *readerly* encounter of that sequence of events, as with James Morgan’s definition: “Plot is the reader’s progressive encounter—cognitive and emotive—of the storyworld, exploring one or more central questions toward some degree of closure.”⁶¹ Rhetoric, defined earlier, is thus a way of referring to the author’s means of creating these effects on the reader. One of the most common rhetorical devices is repetition, two kinds of which are *motif* and *theme*. As concisely explained by Abbott: “Repetition is one of the surest signs of the meaningful,”⁶² and “...With motif, theme is one of the two commonest forms of

⁵⁸ Kelly R. Iverson, “‘Wherever the Gospel Is Preached’: The Paradox of Secrecy in the Gospel of Mark,” in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 188, quoting from Wolfgang Iser, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” *NLH* 3 (1972): 281, 292.

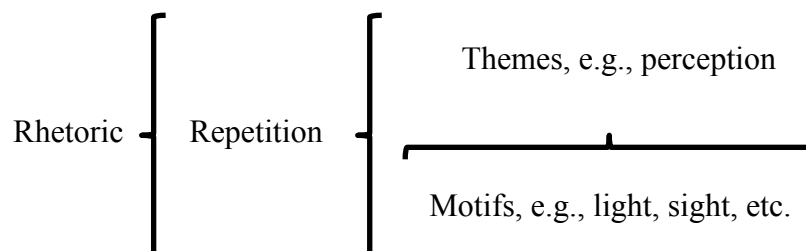
⁵⁹ Darr is especially helpful in drawing out the rhetorical effects of Luke’s preface (1:1–4), as will be seen in the examination of that passage below (Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 83–89).

⁶⁰ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 197.

⁶¹ James M. Morgan, *Encountering Images of Spiritual Transformation: The Thoroughfare Motif within the Plot of Luke-Acts* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 37.

⁶² H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 241.

narrative repetition.”⁶³ What is the difference between a theme and a motif? Abbott summarises a view around which a consensus is growing: “[a motif is a]...discrete thing, image, or phrase that is repeated in a narrative. Theme, by contrast, is a more generalized or abstract concept that is suggested by, among other things, motifs. A coin can be a motif, greed is a theme.”⁶⁴ In these terms, then, this thesis traces the rhetoric of perception—the repetition of passages about perception—including motifs such as light, darkness, sight, and blindness, and the broader themes which they comprise, ignorance, (mis)understanding, illumination (see illustration below). What James Morgan says of his exploration of a motif could be said of the cumulative rhetoric of perception that comprises the theme of perception: “The exploration of this motif’s [symphony-like] performance will be done within the unfolding plot. It asks what difference the motif makes, progressively and cumulatively, to the reader’s encounter with the story’s main questions working toward some degree of closure.”⁶⁵



How will the rhetoric of perception be identified in the narrative? First of all, this thesis avoids a rigid lexical approach (e.g., examining passages where $\gamma\nu\omega$ - stems are present). Rather, passages are selected through a circular process of inductive

⁶³ Ibid., 242.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 237; Cf. Morgan for a review of the “growing consent” regarding the difference between motif and theme explicated above (“How do Motifs,” 198–200).

⁶⁵ Morgan, *Encountering Images*, 5–6.

reading and deductive analysis: (1) Some passages where perception is prominent are obvious in a careful reading (e.g., Luke 24:44–47);⁶⁶ (2) The important lexemes and word-groups in the obvious instances can be searched and then discovered in other passages in which the theme might be identified (e.g., *διανοίγω* with a faculty of perception as direct object, *καλύπτω* and its compounds, etc.); and (3) Motifs that are related to perception, many of which are compellingly identified in scholarship, indicate other examples and possible word groups for which to look (e.g., *φῶς*, *ἀποκάλυψιν*, *ὀφθαλμός*). As a result, this approach avoids the ‘word-concept’ fallacy famously criticised by James Barr, and its flexibility allows the inclusion of terms that might fall outside a pre-determined semantic domain.⁶⁷

Finally, common to most narrative readings of Luke-Acts by scholars in the last few decades is an assumption of unity, not only concerning the relationship of the Third Gospel to Acts, but an assumption that the narrative itself is coherent.

While this thesis is not exceptional in this regard, these issues deserve brief delineation. First, as mentioned at the outset, this thesis assumes the consensus view

⁶⁶ In this thesis, “perception” is understood broadly, to include sense-perception as well as comprehension. Darr at one point differentiates between verbs of “perception” (seeing/hearing), “cognition” (knowing/understanding), and “volitional response” (believing), yet understands all of these to be part of the “rhetoric of perception”, a pattern of “recognition and response” (*Herod the Fox*, 193–94).

⁶⁷ James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961; repr., Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004); Pre-determined semantic domains are sometimes used by scholars in an attempt to be “objective” in the analysis of a theme or motif, but it must be emphasised that “domains” such as those delineated by Louw and Nida are themselves constructions. Geir O. Holmas, for example, sets up his study of the theme of prayer in Luke-Acts this way, admitting on one hand that “...there is no consensus about the procedures and rules according to which a semantic field analysis should be conducted,” but nevertheless using semantic field analysis “...as a means to set up controllable criteria for textual selection” (Geir O. Holmas, *Prayer and Vindication in Luke-Acts: The Theme of Prayer within the Context of the Legitimizing and Edifying Objective of the Lukan Narrative*, LNTS 433 [London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2011], 22 n. 1); To take another example, James Morgan’s analysis of the “thoroughfare motif” in Luke-Acts examines lexemes that Louw and Nida place in the “thoroughfare” semantic domain, thereby excluding *ἐξοδος* in Luke 9:31 (Morgan, *Encountering Images*). In reviewing Morgan’s book, Matthew Sleeman rightly questions the exclusion, offering compelling reasons for why Luke 9:31 contributes to the motif in the Gospel of Luke (“Review of Encountering Images of Spiritual Transformation by James M. Morgan,” *Histos* 8 [2014]: xl–xlii).

that Luke and Acts are two volumes of a singular project and proceeds to read the two together.⁶⁸ However, this thesis also recognises the presence of *two* discrete narratives, one per volume, each with a beginning and ending, a coherent plot, major conflict, and its resolution. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles can be and are read on their own terms as coherent narratives. A theme (or motif) that is present in one may not be present in the other. In the case of the rhetoric of perception, it will be argued that it is developed similarly but distinctly in each narrative. In this regard, Matthew Sleeman's critique of one author's assumptions of unity is worth repeating:

First, Luke and Acts form a real but a relative unity. They are two texts, albeit closely connected: at every turn, Morgan treats them as a unity. He is far from alone in this treatment, but he is somewhat extreme, even uncritical, in its assumption and application. While the idea of a unity infuses his thesis, it is not necessarily inherent to it, and it might be useful and illuminative if, at times, Morgan was willing to loosen the hyphen between Luke and Acts, and explore each text on its own terms, as well as within the perceived diptych. Certainly the motif sits across both volumes, but also it sits informatively and possibly distinctively within each text.⁶⁹

The other assumption, that a narrative is coherent, also must not lead an interpreter to sand off corners that do not fit some interpretive framework or ignore passages that may counter the argument. Thus Mieke Bal's point is another worth repeating:

...coherence is a readerly act, rather than a textual feature, but that the impulse to project coherence on a semiotic object is unavoidable. It is therefore not relevant to denounce coherent readings, but to specify the *kind* of coherence projected, and to analyse the interests that motivate those choices. In this respect, coherence is structurally similar to the concept of ideology.⁷⁰

In the following analysis, Luke-Acts will be read in a holistic manner, interpreting instances of the rhetoric of perception together, allowing each instance to build on

⁶⁸ See n. 3 above.

⁶⁹ Sleeman, review of *Encountering*, xli.

⁷⁰ Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 254 n. 2.

the last, while allowing tension in concepts present in the narrative (e.g., between human freedom and divine providence), respecting the distinctiveness of each narrative, Luke and Acts, and appreciating that the two narratives inform one another.⁷¹

1.4 Structure of This Study

If the text itself is taken as the primary point-of-entry into the inquiry, and if the needs implied by the research context outlined above are indeed present, it follows that this study, to use Darr's language again, must 'get at' the rhetoric of perception 'bit by bit', that is *inductively*, 'topic by topic, passage by passage'.⁷² Such close attention to Luke-Acts, then, precludes systematic comparisons with how other literature of the period may or may not develop similar themes along similar lines.⁷³ This thesis will consequently give careful attention to the narrative, to its text, and in a spirit similar to that of Kavin Rowe's *World Upside Down*, "...display in detail my close readings of the passages necessary to sustain my thesis and, hence, to develop the argument by means of actual exegesis."⁷⁴ Attention to the voluminous secondary literature on Luke-Acts will be selective, attempting to avoid references to works that are only tangentially related.⁷⁵

⁷¹ For a different approach, see Morgan's reading of a five-sequence plot spanning Luke and Acts (*Encountering Images*, 49–55).

⁷² Darr, "Watch How You Listen," 87.

⁷³ But I will, for example, observe how Luke appears to adapt Mark or appropriate Isaiah in regard to the theme, including brief observations on how the theme appears in other works.

⁷⁴ Rowe, *World*, 11; Further, Rowe was not far off when he added, "[Secondary literature on Acts] has now burst the dam and threatens to wash away the text of Acts in a torrent of scholarly glossolalia" *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Thus I am sympathetic with Steve Walton's relatively recent call for a continued focus on the texts themselves in NT studies, a major point of his inaugural lecture, published as "What Is Progress in New Testament Studies?," *ExpT* 124.5 (2013): esp. 214–16.

The chapters below follow the canonical sequence of Luke-Acts, and the chapter breaks are made primarily for practical reasons, in order to track and summarise important cumulative findings. Two chapters are devoted to the Gospel of Luke and one chapter to Acts.⁷⁶ The two chapters on the Third Gospel treat relevant passages in four-part sub-sections. First, key lines from the primary text are presented with the author's translation.⁷⁷ Second, the literary context of the passage is traced. This section also allows for coverage of passages and themes in the context that support or inform the rhetoric of perception in spite of not being central to the thesis (and thus not receiving extensive analysis otherwise). Third, exegetical analysis is made on the relevant details of the passage. Finally, a concluding synthesis is presented in which the contribution of the passage to understanding the rhetoric of perception is summarised. The chapter on Acts is divided into two parts, the first of which surveys the rhetoric of perception through the book until the final scenes in Rome, and the second of which analyses in depth the end of Acts and ties together the rhetoric of perception in the book. The final chapter offers a concluding summary of the rhetoric of perception in Luke-Acts, answering the research question proposed at the beginning of this chapter.

⁷⁶ As has already been noted, the theme is not uniformly present in each book or section, thus the chapter lengths vary. Further, since earlier material necessarily covers (summarises, anticipates, etc.) passages that come later in Luke-Acts, later analyses will typically require less space.

⁷⁷ The text of the NA28 is used. As noted above, textual variants will be discussed only where they are crucial for understanding the rhetoric of perception in a particular passage. References to Luke's Scriptures come from the LXX.

2 Narrative Beginnings (Luke 1–9)

The rhetoric of perception occurs from the very beginning of the Gospel of Luke. However, all of its instances are not equally foregrounded, and observing its presence and interpreting its significance is not necessarily to deny that other features of the narrative are also important. The goal of this chapter is to trace the rhetoric of perception through roughly the first third of the Gospel, from the author's stated goal of bringing his reader(s) to 'recognise the certainty' of the traditions narrated (Luke 1:4) to the Transfiguration of Jesus (9:28–36) and the disciples misunderstanding (9:43b–45) just before the travel narrative commences (9:51).

2.1 The Preface and Purpose of Luke (Luke 1:1–4)

Each of the two volumes that comprise Luke-Acts begins with a preface.¹ In the first volume, the preface states a purpose for writing: so that Theophilus would recognise the certainty concerning the words he was instructed (Luke 1:4). Similarly, Acts opens with words of Jesus' 'instruction' and 'proofs' prior to his ascension.² Questions of knowledge and certainty are thus raised near the beginning of both narratives. The argument of this section is that the purpose statement in the preface of the Gospel (Luke 1:4) orients the audience to an epistemological goal of the narrative—to help the audience *recognise* the certainty of what Luke narrates—and begins the development of the theme of perception.

¹ There is some debate over where exactly the preface in Acts ends, as will be discussed in the first chapter on Acts below. See Steve Walton, "Where Does the Beginning of Acts End?," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, ed. Joseph Verheyden, BETL 142 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 447–67; cf. Pervo, *Acts*, 32–33.

² The connection of the beginning of Acts to the beginning of the Third Gospel will be described in greater detail in the relevant chapter below.

2.1.1 Passage and Translation (Luke 1:1–4)

Ἐπειδὴ περ πολλοὶ ἐπεχείρησαν ἀνατάξασθαι διήγησιν περὶ τῶν
πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων, καθὼς παρέδοσαν ἡμῖν οἱ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς
αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρεταὶ γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου, ἔδοξεν ἡμοῖ παρηκολουθηκότι
ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε, ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ
ᾧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.

Since many have attempted to arrange a narrative concerning the events that have been fulfilled among us—just as they were handed down to us by those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the word—it seemed good to me also, having followed everything carefully from the beginning, to write [it] in orderly fashion for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you would recognise the certainty concerning the words you were instructed.

2.1.2 Literary Context

The preface of the Third Gospel, like Acts, contains the authorial first person, a second-person address to the recipient, Theophilus, and a mention of the larger project.³ To this is added information about other similar works (1:1), the credibility of the author’s sources (1:2), the credibility of the author (1:3), and the purpose for writing (1:4).⁴ Thus, in the first few lines of this large work, the reader has what Darr calls ‘three positive role models of observation and response’:

(1) οἱ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται, those who were ‘eyewitnesses from the beginning’ and who transmitted what they saw and heard; (2) the first-person narrator who ‘*traced everything carefully* from the beginning’; and (3) Theophilus, symbolic of the ideal (κράτιστος) reader and potential/incipient believer (‘friend of God’), who, by implication, is curious to witness and understand (ἐπιγνῶς) God’s activity as depicted in the upcoming narrative (he too is ‘beginning’).⁵

³ For the purpose of this study, no strong view on Theophilus’ role in the production of Luke-Acts is taken. However, he will be taken as representative of the ‘ideal audience’.

⁴ Loveday Alexander, “Formal Elements of Genre: Which Greco-Roman Prologues Most Closely Parallel the Lukan Prologues?,” in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke’s Narrative Claim upon Israel’s Legacy*, ed. David P. Moessner (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 13.

⁵ Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 86 (italics original); cf. Darr, *On Character Building*, 54–55; On v. 3, David P. Moessner notes, “...all three writers Demosthenes, Josephus, and Luke engage the perfect participle of παρηκολουθηκότι to situate themselves and nuance their qualifications precisely when an entire historical process has to be re-signified so that the larger public may understand and take

The first person plural pronouns in Luke 1:1–2 establish an ‘insider group’, people “...who have heard, seen, recognized, responded to and reported ‘the things fulfilled’.”⁶ This study supports Darr’s contention that the rhetoric of perception in Luke-Acts encourages the audience to be(come) a ‘witness’ to ‘the things fulfilled among us’, a prerequisite of which is correctly understanding the narrative, the heart of which is about identifying Jesus as the Messiah who died, was raised, and ascended to the throne of David in fulfilment of the Scriptures (Luke 24:44–47; Acts 2:36).

2.1.3 Exegetical Analysis of Luke 1:3–4

The preface, comprising four verses, is one sentence in Greek. Its main verb (ἔδοξεν) occurs in verse 3, taking a complementary infinitive (γράψαι) to provide the main clause of the passage: “It seemed fitting to me...to write to you.” Verse 4 is a standard purpose clause in Greek marked by ἵνα with a subjunctive verb, and it is syntactically subordinate to γράψαι: “...to write to you...so that you would...”. The rest of the purpose clause contains some terms that deserve further attention.

appropriate action or make a proper response to the new state of affairs” (“Luke as Tradent and Hermeneut,” *NovT* 58.3 [2016]: 297).

⁶ Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 86; The burden of the analysis which follows will be in determining the significance of the purpose statement (1:4), but one other feature of the preface requires comment. Recall from the summary of Richard Dillon’s work in the previous chapter that he, and Karl Kuhn after him, have argued for a syntactical construction in Luke 1:2 that results in the reading, “...who were eye-witnesses from the beginning and became [γενόμενοι] servants of the word...”. Crucially, they argue further that the action of becoming “servants” or “ministers” is connected in some way to the understanding possessed by characters (“Previewing Luke’s Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1–4),” 214); Kuhn, “Beginning”; G. Klein, “Lukas 1,1–4 als theologisches Programm,” in *Zeit und Geschichte*, ed. E. Dinkler (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1964), 193–216; While these authors make insightful observations in their respective interpretations, their exegesis of the participial phrase in Luke 1:2 (οἱ ἂπ’ ἀρχῆς αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι) is at odds with normal syntax (see Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke’s Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1–4 and Acts 1.1*, SNTSMS 78 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 119).

The subjunctive verb ἐπιγνῶς is often overshadowed in scholarly commentary by concerns about other terms in verse 4.⁷ As in one of its primary classical usages, it here means ‘to recognise’ with some fact as object.⁸ The direct object in this case must be the accusative noun ἀσφάλειαν, ‘the certainty’.⁹ Thus Luke writes ‘so that you would recognise the certainty...’. Alexander argues that ἀσφάλειαν should be rendered as an adverb with ἐπιγνῶς (as with a γνω- verb + ἀσφαλές; cf. Acts 21:34; 22:39): ‘so that you may have *assured* knowledge’.¹⁰ While this is semantically possible (adverbial accusative substantives are common enough in Greek), Alexander does not appear to provide evidence of the adverbial use of ἀσφάλεια elsewhere in her argument.¹¹ Also, the adverbial translation risks reducing the *verbal* cognitive aspect of ἐπιγνῶς + a *noun* to a possession of convincing facts, having ‘assured knowledge’.¹² As will be seen later, the rhetoric of perception in Luke suggests that *knowing* is far more complex than the possession of facts. Even in the preface, ἐπιγνῶς...τὴν ἀσφάλειαν may well be about the realisation of the πράγματα (Luke 1:1) as acts of God analogous to Acts 2:22, as Ulrich Luck suggests:

Versuchen wir nunmehr den Sinn des Proömiums zu erschließen, so dürfte es in der ἀσφάλεια, von der Theophilus überzeugt werden soll, nicht etwa um eine historisch zu begründende Sicherheit gehen, die sich nur auf die überlieferten Fakten bezöge, sondern um die Erkenntnis dieser πράγματα als Taten Gottes; genau wie es die alte Formel sagt: Jesus von Nazareth,

⁷ For a brief summary of positions on v. 4, see: Rick Strelan, “A Note on Ἀσφάλεια (Luke 1.4),” *JSNT* 30.2 (2007): 164–65; Cf. François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. Christine M. Thomas, vol. 1, 3 vols., Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 23.

⁸ Alexander, *Preface*, 137.

⁹ BDAG s.v. “ἀσφάλεια.”

¹⁰ Alexander, *Preface*, 140 (emphasis added).

¹¹ Adverbial accusatives are relatively uncommon aside from certain lexemes. Cf. Daniel B Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 200. Luke’s analogous usage of ἀσφαλῶς in Acts 2:36 or ἀσφαλές in Acts 21:34 and 22:39 raises the question of why he should use the noun adverbially in Luke 1:4 rather than the adverb or adjective as in these other instances.

¹² Cf. Bauspieß, *Geschichte*, 244–48.

ausgewiesen von Gott... seine Taten, Wunder und Zeichen hat Gott getan (Apg 2, 22f.).¹³

Thus Luke's purpose is a hermeneutical one, to bring his audience to a point of *recognising* the certainty of the central tenets of his narrative.¹⁴ It is therefore best to retain the full verbal force of ἐπιγνώσῃς.

The prepositional phrase of verse 4 is best resolved, as Alexander suggests, περὶ τῶν λόγων οὓς κατηχήθης: 'concerning the words which you were instructed'.¹⁵ The implication is that Theophilus has prior knowledge of what Luke narrates. The verb κατηχήθης could imply that Theophilus has merely heard some (possibly unfavourable) information or that he has received substantial instruction. Cadbury argues for the former based on κατήχηνται in Acts 21:24, an interpretation that lends itself easily to an apologetic motive for Luke's writing.¹⁶ Alexander finds more compelling evidence for the latter, tentatively suggesting that Luke-Acts may be working like Galen and Hermogenes, "...where the text is presented to the dedicatee as a written version of something already familiar to him."¹⁷ In the conclusion of this thesis, a possible apologetic motive of Luke will receive limited comment (given the

¹³ Ulrich Luck, "Kerygma, Tradition und Geschichte Jesu bei Lukas," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 57.1 (1960): 60; Cf. John. T. Carroll, *Luke: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 22: "[Luke's narrative] is trustworthy not only because of the traditions upon which the author draws but also, and primarily, because the narrative discloses the presence and purpose of God in guiding these events."

¹⁴ Rick Strelan has argued that the sense of ἀσφάλεια is "safety" about rhetorical style in light of the use of ἀσφάλεια in four ancient Greek writings on rhetoric and style (Strelan, "A Note"). Note the awkwardness, however, that results from his proposal, namely, that an author's stated purpose is that his audience would recognise the security of his rhetorical style, that his style is "not-risky" or "over the top", rather than the security of what is actually narrated. Even in Strelan's proposal, surely the point of safe rhetorical style would be just that, to provide assurance of the content of the story. Also weighing against his proposal is the analogous usage of ἀσφαλῶς ... γινώσκέτω in Acts 2:36, already mentioned in the introduction.

¹⁵ Alexander, *Preface*, 139.

¹⁶ Henry J. Cadbury, "The Purpose Expressed in Luke's Preface," *The Expositor* (1921): 431–41; cf. John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, vol. 1, 3 vols., WBC 35A (Dallas: Word, 1989), 11.

¹⁷ Alexander, *Preface*, 192; cf. the possible link of ἀσφάλεια with writing down an oral tradition (140–41); cf. W. C. van Unnik, "Remarks on the Purpose of Luke's Historical Writing (Luke I 1–4)," in *Sparsa Collecta, Part 1. Evangelia, Paulina, Acta*, NovTSup 29 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 6–15.

narrative method earlier set out). In any case, the findings of this thesis will prove compatible with either view of Theophilus' prior knowledge of the gospel.

The next crucial question about Luke 1:4 has to do with its significance. Is it merely a 'conventional afterthought', a possibility Alexander suggests in view of the fact that Luke's preface shares so much in common with other 'scientific' prefaces?¹⁸ In her conclusion, Alexander returns to this question:

It is worth reminding ourselves at this stage that at surface level the preface actually does little to arouse anybody's expectations, at least as regards the content of what is to follow. ...For the reader who is an 'insider', the reassurance lies precisely here: this is an accurate account *of the tradition*.¹⁹

For Alexander, the preface is typical and any possible Christian terminology is neutralised by the other common and 'secular' terms in Luke 1:1–4, leaving Luke's opening far less religious than Matthew, Mark, or John. At most Alexander can say that the preface 'fits' the traditional account. But this argument subtly and unnecessarily places the ordinariness of the preface—it *is* like so many others—against its significance. Also, Alexander says that the 'possibly Christian terms' of Luke's preface are 'deliberately muffled' by 'neutral' terminology common to other prefaces.²⁰ It might be true that a reader unfamiliar with the Christian tradition would not pick up on the religious sense of *πεπληροφορημένων* or *ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου*, as Alexander rightly says. But it is not clear what evidence might suggest that the author's *intentions* in employing common language in the preface is to 'muffle' the religiously loaded terms. Further, one must consider not only the audience's first encounter with the preface, but how the audience's understanding of the preface develops while reading the rest of the narrative.

¹⁸ Alexander, *Preface*, 142.

¹⁹ Ibid., 201–2, emphasis original.

²⁰ Ibid., 201.

When the whole narrative is considered, the purpose statement of the preface is illuminated. In the narrative of the Third Gospel, the rhetoric of perception is found throughout and comes to the fore in the Gospel's climactic moments (Luke 24). The preface raises the question for the audience, "How can I *recognise the certainty*?" Shortly after, Zechariah and Mary, each in turn, essentially ask, "How can I be certain?" (1:18, 34). Using the rhetoric of perception, the narrative encourages the audience to entertain a similar question throughout the Gospel, especially related to Jesus and his role in God's plan of salvation (e.g., Luke 4:22; 5:21; 7:19, 20, 49; 8:25; 9:9, 18, 20; 22:67, 70; 23:1, 39). In the Gospel's final chapter, 'recognising the certainty' of a centrepiece of Luke's narrative, the scriptural necessity of the Messiah's suffering, is not achieved solely through the observation of the facts or remembrance of Jesus' teaching, but by an illuminated understanding of the Scriptures.²¹ Given the significance of perception for Luke, then, it seem best to let Luke 1:4 have its real force as a purpose statement. This position will be further supported as evidence for the significance of the rhetoric of perception accumulates.

2.1.4 Synthesis

The preface of the Gospel of Luke is typical of a Greco-Roman preface of technical prose. In spite of its common prefatory language, its significance for understanding the author's purpose should not be underestimated, especially given the rhetoric of perception in the rest of the narrative. The author's purpose of writing, to help his audience 'recognise the certainty' about the tradition, raises a hermeneutical question at the outset that the narrative will answer as it unfolds. The subtle marking of

²¹ Bauspieß, *Geschichte*, esp. 249–303; cf. Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 269–70.

‘insiders’ (‘things fulfilled among us’ in 1:1 and ‘handed down to us’ in 1:2) will also play a prominent role later in the narrative’s rhetoric of perception.

In light of the preface, how should the audience expect to ‘recognise the certainty’? The preface gives a few clues, implying that knowledge of the credibility of sources (1:2) and the credibility of the author (1:3) are important factors. These factors are not unique to religious literature, of course, and do not imply any kind of need for divine revelation. They are, in fact, quite natural, human hermeneutical principles. However, these will not be the only factors that the author suggests are important in affirming the truth of what Luke narrates. Sometimes, knowledge comes through other means, as indicated by the stories of Zechariah and Mary, to which this study now turns.

2.2 Zechariah and Mary Question Gabriel

When Luke launches into his narrative (at Luke 1:5), the story becomes distinctly *scriptural*. The language, characterisation, and scenes are reminiscent of scriptural birth announcements presumably familiar to Luke’s audience.²² In setting up the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, Luke narrates their respective birth announcements. The recipients of these announcements, Zechariah and Mary, are the most prominent characters in chapter one. They each ask Gabriel, the angelic messenger, a similar question to the one already raised implicitly by the preface: *How can I be certain?* Thus the task in examining this section will be to understand

²² As is often noted; cf. Paul S. Minear, “Luke’s Use of the Birth Stories,” in *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays Presented in Honor of Paul Schubert*, ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), 111–130; Carroll, *Luke*, 23; For a helpful summary of issues of form and structure, see Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 1:17–23.

the respective responses of Zechariah and Mary and determine how their responses inform the rhetoric of perception.

2.2.1 Passages and Translation (Luke 1:18, 34)

καὶ εἶπεν Ζαχαρίας πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον· κατὰ τί γνώσομαι τοῦτο; ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι πρεσβύτης καὶ ἡ γυνή μου προβεβηκυῖα ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτῆς. (1:18)

And Zechariah said to the angel, “By what will I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years.”

εἶπεν δὲ Μαριάμ πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον· πῶς ἔσται τοῦτο, ἐπεὶ ἄνδρα οὐ γινώσκω; (1:34)

But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not known a man?”

2.2.2 Literary Context

The structure and style of Luke 1–2, questions of sources and redaction, and frameworks for understanding the theological contributions of these early chapters to Luke (and Acts) have occupied modern scholarship.²³ The scenes featuring Zechariah and Mary have, of course, each invited their own scholarly questions. Important for this thesis is the idea, around which there is general scholarly consensus, that the infancy narratives introduce key motifs that will be developed throughout the narrative.²⁴

²³ For a thorough treatment of Luke’s birth narratives, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, Updated ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1993).

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 242: “The infancy narrative should be seen as a true introduction to some of the main themes of the Gospel proper, and no analysis of Lucan theology should neglect it”; cf. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), 17; Jean-Paul Audet argues that Luke 1–2 form a preface (“Autour de la théologie de Luc I-II,” *Sciences Ecclésiastiques* 11 [1959]: 409–18); see also Rowe, who demonstrates the significance of the infancy narratives for Luke’s theology (*Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* [Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006]).

Karl Kuhn has perhaps provided the most compelling case for seeing the characters of the infancy narrative as paradigmatic for the Third Gospel. Kuhn further shows how the infancy narrative parallels Luke 24 in its themes of Israel's redemption, inclusion of the Gentiles, forgiveness of sins, and scriptural fulfilment.²⁵ In his conclusion Kuhn goes further, suggesting that the characters of the infancy narrative, like the disciples in Luke 24, demonstrate a move from doubt to faith and witness:

Rather than simply alluding to a single, albeit key, transitional moment in the disciples' understanding as portrayed in Luke 24 (as Dillon claims), the ambiguous phrase of Luke 1.2 may rather reflect an ongoing pattern throughout the gospel and Acts in which individual characters are confronted with the reality of God's in-breaking reign in Jesus and respond with praise and testimony.²⁶

Kuhn leaves this part of his argument underdeveloped (as he admits), but a compelling case that the characters of Luke's narrative are key models for perception has been made by another.

As briefly summarised in the introduction, John Darr argues that "Luke-Acts maneuvers its readers into alignment with the 'witnesses' (*autoptai* or *martyres*) who constitute the insiders of the story."²⁷ This is done by means of the rhetoric of perception, including the narrative's characterisation in which characters are "...graded (largely by the narrator and other authoritative voices) on the basis of their ability to perceive and embrace the divine will as manifested in the persons, messages, and activities of the protagonists."²⁸ Although Darr does not discuss

²⁵ Kuhn, "Beginning," 248–50.

²⁶ Ibid., 254; cf. Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1–4)"; Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*; See also, Joshua W. Jipp, "The Beginnings of a Theology of Luke—Acts: Divine Activity and Human Response," *JTI* 8.1 (2014): 23–44.

²⁷ Darr, *On Character Building*, 53.

²⁸ Ibid., 57.

Zechariah and Mary in any detail, these two characters will be considered along similar lines, as possible ‘models of perception’ below.

2.2.3 Exegetical Analysis

The first two stories of the Gospel of Luke feature two parallel characters, each visited by the angel Gabriel who announces some spectacular message about a child who would be born to each of them, respectively.²⁹ Further, they are told that each child will play a crucial role in the fulfilment of Israel’s salvation. For both, the prospect of conceiving a child involves the miraculous: Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, are too old and Elizabeth is barren; Mary is a virgin. Zechariah and Mary each find their announcements difficult to comprehend. Both question the angelic messenger, Gabriel (Luke 1:18, 34).³⁰ And yet, it appears that Mary’s question is not exclusive of faith—“blessed is she who believed” (1:45)—whereas Zechariah is chastised for his unbelief—“you did not believe my words” (1:20).

The focus in this analysis will be on understanding the question each of the characters asks as it relates to perception. Both ask a question with a future tense verb: “By what will I know?” (γνώσομαι) (1:18) and “How will this be?” (ἔσται) (1:34). Zechariah’s question is strikingly similar to the question Abraham asks God

²⁹ The parallels between the two narratives are often noted, e.g., Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 15–38; Carroll, *Luke*, 43.

³⁰ Steven R. Harmon has defended a chiasm in this context, the centre of which is Zechariah’s question: (A) Conflict: Zechariah and Elizabeth are childless (vv. 5–7); (B) Zechariah serves at the temple (v. 8); (C) Zechariah enters the temple (v. 9); (D) The people are praying outside the temple (v. 10); (E) The angel addresses Zechariah (vv. 11–17); (F) Zechariah responds to the angel (v. 18); (E’) The angel answers Zechariah (vv. 19–20); (D’) The people are waiting outside the temple (v. 21); (C’) Zechariah exits the temple (v. 22); (B’) Zechariah completes his service at the temple (v. 23); (A’) Resolution: Elizabeth conceives (vv. 24–25) (“Zechariah’s Unbelief and Early Jewish-Christian Relations: The Form and Structure of Luke 1:5–25 as a Clue to the Narrative Agenda of the Gospel of Luke,” *BTB* 31.1 [2001]: 10–16); Arguments for chiasms of a length beyond a paragraph are often dubious (see discussion in Joshua L. Mann, “The Rhetorical Function of Chiasmus in Acts 2:2–4,” *MJT* 9.1 [2010]: 66–77). For this reason, I hold Harmon’s argument as an intriguing possibility given the importance of the rhetoric of perception elsewhere in Luke-Acts.

after receiving a promise of an inheritance: “By what will I know that I will inherit it?” (κατὰ τί γνώσομαι ὅτι κληρονομήσω αὐτήν) (Gen 15:8). Note the parallels:

Zechariah’s temple service and Abraham’s offering, the promise of a son, and the question of the recipient. Yet, Abraham’s question does not seem to be about the promise of a son in particular. In fact, following the promise of a son is Abraham’s well-known response: “And Abram *believed* God and it was credited to him as righteousness” (καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην) (Gen 15:6). Perhaps the key parallels to be drawn, then, are broader than these details. In the larger context of Genesis, Abraham demonstrates a mixture of faith and unbelief (e.g., Gen 16:2; 17:17). Zechariah, then, is a type of Abraham: a faithful, pious man of God (Luke 1:5–6, 64, 66–79) who nonetheless wavers in full belief of God’s promise of an heir.

Gabriel responds to Zechariah’s request for a confirmation by giving him what he asks for. The confirmation will be muteness until the birth of the son (1:20).³¹ If that were the end of it, the audience might simply understand this as a confirming sign that is not necessarily punitive. But Gabriel’s final words to Zechariah indicate otherwise: “...because you did not believe my words...” (ἀνθ’ ὧν οὐκ ἐπίστευσας τοῖς λόγοις μου) (Luke 1:20). Zechariah’s question betrayed a lack of faith.³²

³¹ Deafness might also be implied (Luke 1:22 and κωφός). In Luke 1:62, Zechariah is spoken to through the use of hand signals; see Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, vol. 1, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1994), 92.

³² Zechariah’s unbelief sits awkwardly with Gabriel’s earlier affirmation that God has heard his prayer (Luke 1:13). If the promise is an answer to Zechariah’s prayer, why did he fail to believe it? The first καὶ in verse 13 could suggest the consequence of Zechariah’s answered prayer, namely that Elizabeth would bear a son (καὶ ἡ γυνή σου Ἐλισάβετ γεννήσει υἱόν σοι) (BDF §442[2] “Consecutive καὶ,” with the sense “and so”). Even if this is the case, it still does not clarify the “what” or “when” of the prayer. One wonders whether Zechariah would continue praying for a son in his old age. If he was, it seems he had little faith his prayer would be answered in light of his unbelief at the angel’s

So which of Gabriel's words (τοῖς λόγοις) (1:20) did Zechariah fail to believe: only those of a son being born, or, additionally, that this son would have an eschatological Elijah-like prophetic ministry? It is difficult to separate one from the other and the narrative does not permit such a bifurcation. Rather, it is likely that Zechariah's unbelief encompassed *the whole* of the announcement which included not only a miraculous birth, but perhaps more extraordinarily, that this son would be a powerful prophet who would usher in salvation to Israel by preparing the people for the Lord (1:15–17). Zechariah's response betrayed doubt that God was fulfilling these redemptive promises *at that time* and *through him* (through an heir). In Luke-Acts, Luke labours to show how 'the events fulfilled among us' (τῶν πεπληροφορημένων ἐν ἡμῖν πραγμάτων) (Luke 1:1) are 'fulfilled' in God's redemptive plan spoken of throughout the Scriptures.³³ Characters frequently fail to see how these salvific events 'fit', including Zechariah. But as the story unfolds, the reader sees that Gabriel's words to Zechariah are fulfilled in just the way he says (τοῖς λόγοις μου, οἵτινες πληρωθήσονται εἰς τὸν καιρὸν αὐτῶν) (Luke 1:20), in Zechariah's muteness (1:22), in Elizabeth's conceiving of a child (1:24), followed by confirmations in 1:36 and 1:41, the birth and naming of John (1:57, 59–63), the joy

news (cf. 1:18, 20). It is possible the angel refers to a past prayer for a son. Or it could be that the prayer, likely made in the Holy Place, was for the salvation of Israel. A clue might be found in the respective praise-hymns of Mary, in her Magnificat (1:46–55), and Zechariah, in his Benedictus (1:67–79), which, while having a personal element (for Mary: 1:48a, 48b, 49a; for Zechariah: 1:76, though less clear), essentially concern the redemption of Israel. One should also remember that at the very moment Zechariah is conversing with the angel, a pious group remained outside the temple praying, it would seem, for Israel's redemption. Ultimately, the answer to the prayer, whatever and whenever the prayer, results in Elizabeth bearing a son who would in some way usher in salvation for Israel, as the angel explains in vv. 16–17. Cf. F. W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age: A Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 29; Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 1:82; Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Luke*, 5th ed., ICC (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1922), 13.

³³ Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1–4)," 205–227; John T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts*, SNTSMS 76 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Darrell L. Bock, *A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

of the parents and many others (1:58, 64), the characterisation of John as great by Jesus (7:28), and the outworking of John's ministry (3:1–20; 7:18–29, esp. v. 29 where 'all the people' are said to have been baptised by John).

Mary's question is verbally parallel to Zechariah's. On the face of it, then, it would seem to betray the same spirit of disbelief.³⁴

Zechariah (1:18)	καὶ εἶπεν <i>Zαχαρίας</i>	πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον	κατὰ τί	γνώσομαι τοῦτο;	ἐγὼ γάρ...
Mary (1:34)	εἶπεν δὲ <i>Μαριὰμ</i>	πρὸς τὸν ἄγγελον	πῶς	ἔσται τοῦτο,	ἐπεὶ...

The crucial differences in the context, however, are at least three: (1) Gabriel's construal of Zechariah's question as disbelief (1:20); (2) Mary's submissive response which implies trust (1:38); and (3) Elizabeth's confirmation of Mary's belief (*καὶ μακαρία ἡ πιστεύσασα*) (1:45).³⁵ Carroll suggests that Zechariah's question was inappropriate because it was done in 'self-interest' (i.e., he wanted a sign), while Mary's was innocuous because it was a question of 'causation'.³⁶ But this interpretative move is too quick to harmonise the characters' questions with their respective outcomes. The narrative does not offer the details necessary for such an explanation. Later in the narrative, the Parable of the Sower will offer a category for differentiating the faith responses of characters, namely, the quality of one's heart (8:15).³⁷ However, at this point the reader should only conclude that the act of asking the question does not itself exclude faith.

³⁴ Some have questioned the logic of Mary's question, e.g., why she would not have assumed a natural conception of the promised son. Such concerns overlook the literary function of the passage, namely to highlight the miraculous nature of Jesus' birth and to offer a contrast of response to Zechariah. For a discussion, see Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 303–9.

³⁵ Cf. Gabriel's response to Zechariah: *ὡν οὐκ ἐπίστευσας* (1:20).

³⁶ Carroll, *Luke*, 44.

³⁷ See the relevant analysis of the Parable below.

2.2.4 Synthesis

In the face of the spectacular description of a child who would grow up and help usher in eschatological redemption to the entire nation, Zechariah is unable to get past the seemingly insurmountable physical obstacle—he and his wife’s age and his wife’s barrenness—and thus asks for confirmation, perhaps in the form of a sign. In contrast, Mary, in spite of also asking a similar question, responds with faith to the promise of a son who would be a Davidic ruler, whose kingdom would have no end. Zechariah is given two reasons to believe the good news: (1) The angelic messenger is Gabriel himself, one who stands before God and has been sent by him (1:19); and (2) Zechariah will be given a sign in that he will become mute (1:20). Mary is similarly given an explanation of (1) the manner of the conception, as well as (2) a sign, Elizabeth’s pregnancy (and, subsequently, the leaping of the baby in Elizabeth’s womb) (1:41).

Both characters ultimately see the fulfilment of the immediately promised sign and react with words of praise (1:46–55, 67–79) that indicate belief in the larger promise: the redemption of Israel. In great contrast to Zechariah’s initial unbelief, his story ends with words of prophetic praise, that God has visited his people, and given knowledge of salvation to his people (1:68, 77), exemplifying a move from doubt to faith. The characterisation of Mary is one of an introspective person of unwavering obedience (1:29; 2:19, 51). As will be seen, she fits the model of perception encouraged by the Parable of the Sower: one whose heart is good, who carefully ‘listens’, who does not waver in unbelief (8:15, 16; cf. 10:39).³⁸

³⁸ Note that in Luke 2:49–50, Mary and Joseph do not understand Jesus’ insistence that he must be in his Father’s house, anticipating the misunderstanding of Jesus’ closest followers later in the narrative (cf. Frein, “Misunderstanding,” 338). To be clear, Luke 10:39 speaks of a different Mary,

The audience, then, encounters in Zechariah and Mary two models of perception that might serve to answer the question raised at the outset: How does one ‘recognise the certainty’? The narrative offers the following answers. First, believe God’s promises, even when the miraculous is involved. Second, when ‘pondering all these things’, do not let one’s ability to rationalise be determinative. Third, consider the credibility of the messenger who brings such news and respond accordingly. Fourth, consider God-given signs as a confirmation of the (future) fulfilment of his promises. Fifth, think *scripturally*. By patterning the narrative on familiar scriptural birth stories, Luke reinforces for the audience the hermeneutical importance of the Scriptures.

2.3 Simeon Sees the Messiah (Luke 2:25–35)

For Simeon, seeing Jesus *is* seeing salvation (2:30), and to welcome Israel’s consolation (2:25) *is* to welcome Jesus. But not everyone will welcome the ‘good news for all people’ (2:10), as Simeon’s prophecy makes clear with its description of the conflict and opposition that will occur in Israel concerning the Messiah (2:34–35). Despite the opposition, this salvation will be a ‘light for revelation for the Gentiles and glory for your people Israel’ (2:32).

2.3.1 Passage and Translation (Luke 2:29–35)

νῦν ἀπολύεις τὸν δοῦλόν σου, δέσποτα, κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ· ὅτι εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου, ὃ ἡτοίμασας κατὰ πρόσωπον πάντων τῶν λαῶν, φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν καὶ δόξαν λαοῦ σου Ἰσραὴλ.

καὶ ἦν ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ θαυμάζοντες ἐπὶ τοῖς λαλουμένοις περὶ αὐτοῦ. καὶ εὐλόγησεν αὐτοὺς Συμεὼν καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς Μαριὰμ τὴν μητέρα

but the model of perception is similar. See discussion below. On the “heart” as a place of perception and reflection, see discussion of the Parable of the Sower below.

αὐτοῦ· ἰδοὺ οὗτος κείται εἰς πτώσιν καὶ ἀνάστασιν πολλῶν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ εἰς σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον—καὶ σοῦ [δὲ] αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ῥομφαία—ὅπως ἂν ἀποκαλυφθῶσιν ἐκ πολλῶν καρδιῶν διαλογισμοί.

Now you are releasing your slave in peace, Lord, according to your word, because my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all the peoples—a light for revelation for the Gentiles and glory for your people, Israel.

And his father and mother were marveling at the things spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother: “See: this one is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel and for a sign that is contested—and a sword will pass through your own soul—in order that the opinions of many hearts will be revealed.”

2.3.2 Literary Context

Some forty days after Jesus’ birth, Joseph and Mary bring him to the temple in order ‘to present him to the Lord’ (παραστῆσαι τῷ κυρίῳ) (2:21).³⁹ In this scene, two prophetic figures encounter Jesus: Simeon and Anna. Simeon is described as a ‘righteous’ and ‘devout’ man who was ‘looking for the consolation of Israel’ (προσδεχόμενος παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ) (2:25; cf. 2:38; 23:51). Simeon had received a revelation from the Holy Spirit that before his death he would see the Lord’s Messiah (τὸν χριστὸν κυρίου) (2:26). Having already encountered the title ‘Messiah’ applied to Jesus (in 2:11), the audience can anticipate what will happen: a divinely orchestrated encounter with this prophetic figure.⁴⁰

Simeon takes Jesus into his arms, blesses God, and prophesies. In so doing, he affirms the following: (1) the Lord has kept his promise that Simeon would see the Messiah before his death (2:29; cf. 26); (2) Seeing Jesus, the Messiah, is connected to seeing the Lord’s salvation (τὸ σωτήριόν σου) (2:30); (3) this salvation is

³⁹ The approximation of forty days derives from Lev 12:1–8; cf. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 117.

⁴⁰ The divine orchestration is also implied by Simeon’s arrival to the temple “in the Spirit” at the right moment; cf. Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 1:118.

wrapped up with the Messiah and has implications not only for Israel but for the Gentiles, too (2:32); and (4) the arrival of the Messiah will be met with divided responses (2:34–35).

A second, briefer encounter in the temple is described, this time with a prophetess. Anna, like Simeon, is presented as an ideal figure: an elderly widow who has dedicated herself to serving in the temple with fastings and prayers (2:37). At the same hour (αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ)—probably around the same time as the encounter with Simeon, underscoring the gravity of prophetic activity—she began praising God and speaking of Jesus to ‘all those looking for the redemption of Jerusalem’ (πᾶσιν τοῖς προσδεχομένοις λύτρωσιν Ἱερουσαλήμ) (2:38; cf. 2:25).⁴¹ Simeon’s prophetic words will receive further attention in the exegetical analysis below as relates to the rhetoric of perception.

2.3.3 Exegetical Analysis

This analysis will focus on three aspects of the passage: (1) The concept of ‘seeing’ salvation/the Messiah; (2) The meaning of ‘light for revelation’ (φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν); and (3) the nature of opposition concerning Jesus implied in 2:34–35.

First, the repetition of ‘sight’ language in the passage alerts the audience to Simeon’s perception of Jesus’ identity. Simeon is promised that he would not ‘see’ death (μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον) until he ‘sees’ the Lord’s Messiah (ἴδῃ τὸν χριστὸν κυρίου) (2:26). When Simeon encounters Jesus, he praises God “...because my eyes have seen your salvation” (ὅτι εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου) (2:30). The sight of

⁴¹ The verb used to describe Anna’s movement towards the scene (ἐφίστημι) sometimes includes the sense of ‘coming upon with suddenness’ (cf. Luke 2:9; 24:4). If this sense is here present, Anna may be understood as coming upon Simeon, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus suddenly, even at the very moment (αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ) (2:38) of Simeon’s prophetic word. Cf. BDAG s.v. “ἐφίστημι.”

the Lord's Messiah is in one sense quite literal: Simeon has seen him with his own two eyes. However, implicit in physical sight is Simeon's prophetic *recognition* of Jesus as the Messiah. That recognition is the prerequisite to the claim that he has seen the Lord's *salvation* with his eyes (2:30). This passage is one example of a sight (and blindness) motif that runs throughout the Third Gospel, key moments of which include Jesus' ministry of 'sight to the blind' (4:18), Herod's desire to 'see' Jesus (Luke 9:9; 23:8), the blind man, who receives his sight and responds by faithfully following Jesus just after the disciples' miscomprehension of Jesus' passion prediction (Luke 18:35–43; cf. 18:31–34), Zacchaeus' attempt to 'see' Jesus (19:3), various characters 'watching' during Jesus crucifixion (esp. 23:47–49), and the Emmaus disciples who cannot recognise Jesus until their eyes are opened (24:16, 31).⁴²

Second, the phrase 'light for revelation' suggests a revelatory dimension to salvation in Luke-Acts. Verse 32 describes the salvation that Simeon has seen as a 'light for revelation for the Gentiles' and 'glory for your people, Israel'. It is probable that these two groups of people, Jews and Gentiles, together represent the πάντων τῶν λαῶν (2:31), before whom the Lord's salvation has been prepared. The key phrase as it relates to perception is φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν.⁴³ Here it is applied to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 26:18), but the connection of revelation to salvation is elsewhere

⁴² John Darr has written extensively on how this theme connects with specific characters: *On Character Building*; "Watch How You Listen"; *Herod the Fox*; On sight and blindness, see: Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness*; cf. Hamm, "Sight to the Blind"; Wilson, "Hearing the Word"; Culpepper, "Seeing the Kingdom."

⁴³ Whether "glory" in 31 is parallel to "light" or "revelation" is not essential to determine for this discussion. With Nolland, it seems preferable to take "glory" and "light" as parallel (*Luke 1–9:20*, 1:120).

applied more broadly (e.g., Luke 1:77; 8:10–11; 10:21–22; cf. Isa 52:10).⁴⁴ In light of the verbal parallels and Isaiah’s influence elsewhere in Luke-Acts, it is likely that the language of Luke 2:32 draws on Isaiah 42:6 and especially 49:6, where the Servant is described as ‘for a light of nations...for salvation unto the ends of the earth’ (εἰς φῶς ἐθνῶν...εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς) (Isa 49:6).⁴⁵ In Luke 2:32 the sense of ‘revelation’ (ἀποκάλυψις) is less explicitly connected to the concealing and revealing work of God (cf. 8:10–11; 10:21–22; 9:45; 18:34; 24:45) and is primarily applied to the *reach* of salvation—it will be made known to the ends of the earth, the domain of the Gentiles (cf. Acts 1:8; 26:18).⁴⁶ Even so, as will become clearer, God’s plan of redemption includes both ideas.

Third, on a much more negative note, verses 34–35 emphasise how Israel’s response to Jesus will be a divided one, anticipating the climax of this conflict of perception in Acts 28.⁴⁷ Three descriptions make this conflict clear: (1) Jesus has been appointed by God for the ‘fall and rise of many in Israel’ (εἰς πτώσιν καὶ ἀνάστασιν πολλῶν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ) (2:34);⁴⁸ (2) Jesus has been appointed as a ‘sign to

⁴⁴ As Carroll says, “...glory for Israel and illumination for Gentiles are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are twins birthed by the same Scripture and by promises of the same God” (*Luke*, 78).

⁴⁵ Thus Nolland suggests εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν as an explanatory gloss to φῶς...ἐθνῶν (*Luke* 1–9:20, 1:120); The most thorough treatment of the significance of Isaiah 49:6 (and the “new exodus motif”) in Luke-Acts is David Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, WUNT 2/130 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000). While Pao overinterprets the extent to which Luke draws on the so-called Isaianic New Exodus, many of his insights are helpful. For a thorough critique of Pao, see: Joshua L. Mann, “The (New) Exodus in Luke and Acts: An Appeal for Moderation,” in *Reverberations of the Exodus in Scripture* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2014), 94–120.

⁴⁶ This is further supported by the presence of an alternative description of how the salvation relates to Israel, namely for ‘glory’ (δόξαν) (2:32).

⁴⁷ Notice that Simeon addresses Mary in particular. This kind of insider-knowledge appears throughout the narrative, as when Jesus turns from the crowd to his disciples to explain the conflict that awaits (e.g., 9:43b–45; 18:31–34).

⁴⁸ Some scholars find in the phrase “fall and rise” a temporal sequence in which the many initially fall and subsequently rise, but this seems unlikely given the other ways that the division is emphasised in the context as well as throughout Luke-Acts. For a more elaborate defense of the temporal view, see B. Koet, “Simeons Worte (Lk 2,29–32, 34c–35) Und Israels Geschick,” in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, vol. 2, 3 vols., BETL 100 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 1149–69; cf. Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke* (Westminster John Knox

be contested' (εἰς σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον) (2:34); and (3) the purpose (ὅπως) of this divine appointment is 'that the opinions of many hearts will be revealed' (2:35).⁴⁹

Carroll summarises this well:

Simeon envisages the contrasting responses and destinies of persons who welcome and of those who resist God's saving initiative in the Messiah Jesus. Conflict lies ahead. The result of the ministry of John the Baptizer and then the ministry of Jesus the Messiah (as well as his witnesses in Acts) will be a divided people, culminating in the last scene in Acts, where Paul's message produces division in his audience of Jews at Rome (28:24). ... The character of one's response to Jesus will expose the character of one's inner thoughts, of one's disposition toward God (2:35). In this sense, Jesus will be a sign (*sēmeion*): response to Jesus will point to one's response to God.⁵⁰

The arrival of the Messiah ushers in a time of decision for God's people: their day of visitation has come (Luke 19:44). God appoints John the Baptist to prepare the people for the Messiah, when "...all flesh will *see* the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6; cf. Luke 1:16–17, 76–77; 3:1–20). The Messiah's ministry entails preaching the kingdom of God to the cities of Israel, calling for repentance (Luke 4:43). As anticipated, the response is mixed; not all are able to hear, bear fruit, and persevere (Luke 8:10–11, 15, 18; 13:24; 19:42–44). The proclamation to Israel (and then to the nations) continues after the Messiah's death, resurrection, and ascension—ministry through the Spirit-empowered work of Jesus' followers (Luke 24:46–49; Acts 1:6–8). At decisive moments, however, Jewish rejection seems final (Luke 19:42–44; Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:28). At least two broad ways to interpret these dramatic rejection scenes present themselves: (1) Israel's disputed response to the Messiah represents a wholesale rejection by corporate Israel, and therefore Acts 28:28 is *final*;

Press, 1984), 57; A compelling argument against this view is given by Michael Wolter, "Israel's Future and the Delay of the Parousia, according to Luke," in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel: Luke's Narrative Claim upon Israel's Legacy*, ed. David P. Moessner (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1999), 307–24. Many of the related issues will be taken up in discussing Acts 28 below.

⁴⁹ Cf. BDAG s.v. "ἀντιλέγω" and "διαλογισμός."

⁵⁰ Carroll, *Luke*, 79.

or (2) the proclamation of salvation to Israel is finally finished in Acts 28, after which those who have rejected are cut off and those Jews and Gentiles who have believed now represent true Israel.⁵¹ At this point in the narrative, it would be premature to attempt to solve this conundrum. The important point is that Simeon's prophetic word to Mary in Luke 2:34–35 anticipates *the centrality of disputed perceptions of Jesus to the narrative*, even as Simeon himself exemplifies the kind of 'spiritual' vision positively portrayed throughout.⁵²

2.3.4 Synthesis

In Luke 2:25–35, the theme of perception appears at a number of levels and in a number of ways. First, in Simeon might be found another model of perception similar to Zechariah and Mary. Simeon's disposition is one of 'looking for the consolation of Israel', believing that God will keep his scriptural promises, and 'seeing' the Messiah. Other characters in the narrative will try to 'see' or perceive who Jesus is, with varying levels of success.

Second, God's providence over the perception of people concerning the Messiah is suggested by: (1) the orchestration of the encounter of Simeon and Jesus; (2) the specific revelation to Simeon that he would see the Messiah (2:26); (3) the implication of the Messiah's appointment (*καίμαι*) for the rise and fall of many in

⁵¹ Indeed, the situation is more complex than the impression this dichotomy gives, but further delineation will be better served if held until more of Luke-Acts has been examined. For a summary of issues, see Wolter, "Israel's Future"; cf. Jacob Jervell, *Luke and the People of God: A New Look at Luke-Acts* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972), 41–74.

⁵² As Alexander says, "...Luke stresses the perspicuity of Simeon's spiritual eyesight by the apparently redundant phrase οἱ ὀφθαλμοί in Lk. 2.30. What after all would one use eyes for but to 'see' (εἶδον)? This spiritual vision is something achieved by 'all flesh' in Isa. 40.5 (Lk. 3.6)... But the Isaiah 6 passage cited at the end of Acts makes it clear that it is possible to have 'eyes' and yet fail to 'see': and this is indeed the tragedy of the story Luke unfolds" (*Acts in Its Ancient Literary Context: A Classicist Looks at the Acts of the Apostles*, LNTS 298 [London: T & T Clark, 2005], 221); this chapter was earlier published as "Reading Luke-Acts from Back to Front," in *The Unity of Luke-Acts*, BETL (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 419–46.

Israel (2:34) (cf. 8:10; 10:21–24); and (4) the fulfilment implied by the scriptural intertext in 2:32. Yet, as elsewhere in Luke-Acts, God’s oversight here does not appear to negate the volition of the people who encounter Jesus, as is implied by the revelation of the ‘opinions of many hearts’ (2:35). In other words, the implication is that the Messiah will bring to light the opinions of people about him, but no indication is found here that their opinions will be manipulated or that they will not be culpable for rejecting Jesus.⁵³

Third, the divided responses to Jesus anticipated in Luke 2:34–35 imply some obstacle(s) to perception, although none is specified. Further, readers are encouraged to anticipate such conflict and continue to consider how and whether characters rightly perceive Jesus’ identity. As Fitzmyer says, “...the chord now struck [in Luke 2:34–35] will be orchestrated in many ways in the Gospel proper.”⁵⁴

2.4 Jesus Reads from Isaiah (Luke 4:14–30)

In Luke, the story of Jesus’ Nazareth synagogue ‘sermon’ sets the stage for the nature of his ministry and showcases the first clear fulfilment of Simeon’s prophecy regarding a divided response to the Messiah (2:34–35). The depiction of the opening and closing of the Isaiah scroll, which creates a frame around the citation of Isaiah 61:1–2/58:6, heightens the drama: Jesus stands, is handed the scroll, and opens it; and after reading he closes it, hands it back, and sits (4:17, 20), after which he claims that the Scripture has been fulfilled in the hearing of his audience (4:20). Yet in spite

⁵³ Further discussion of the tension between divine providence and human culpability will be taken up in the section on the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp below.

⁵⁴ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (I–Ix)*, vol. 1, AB 28 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 423.

of the good news that Jesus is anointed to preach, the audience ultimately rejects its hometown prophet and becomes a negative example of perception in the narrative.

2.4.1 Passage and Translation (Luke 4:17–21)

καὶ ἐπεδόθη αὐτῷ βιβλίον τοῦ προφήτου Ἰσαΐου καὶ ἀναπτύξας τὸ βιβλίον
εὗρεν τὸν τόπον οὗ ἦν γεγραμμένον·
πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ’ ἐμὲ
οὗ εἵνεκεν ἔχρισέν με
εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς,
ἀπέσταλκέν με,
κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεςιν
καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν,
ἀποστεῖλαι τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφέσει,
κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν.
καὶ πτύξας τὸ βιβλίον ἀποδοὺς τῷ ὑπηρέτῃ ἐκάθισεν· καὶ πάντων οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ
ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ ἦσαν ἀτενίζοντες αὐτῷ. ἤρξατο δὲ λέγειν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὅτι
σήμερον πεπλήρωται ἡ γραφὴ αὕτη ἐν τοῖς ὠσὶν ὑμῶν.

And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him and he opened the book and found the place where it is written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
Because he anointed me to preach the good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
And the recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free the oppressed
To proclaim the favourable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book, gave it to the assistant, and sat; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

2.4.2 Literary Context

After encountering Simeon, the subject of the previous section, the reader is drawn to ask, as Carroll suggests, “Who, after Simeon’s example, will embrace the Messiah through whom God effects a people’s salvation, and who will oppose him?”⁵⁵ In Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth, the reader will encounter the first major instance of the latter.

⁵⁵ Carroll, *Luke*, 79–80.

After his temptation (4:1–13), Jesus returns to Galilee, empowered by the Spirit to begin his ministry of healing and teaching. Jesus’ routine includes travelling around the region, teaching in the synagogues (4:16). Coming to his hometown of Nazareth, he takes an active role in a synagogue service and reads a passage of Scripture from a scroll of the prophet Isaiah (Luke 4:16–20). His reading speaks of a Spirit-empowered figure who will announce good news and heal the poor, captives, blind, and oppressed (4:18–19). In the Gospel of Luke, these groups of people represent the spiritually needy, whose blindness and captivity signify their need for God’s spiritual healing, liberation, and forgiveness.

After Jesus reads the Scripture, a dramatic moment ensues: With all eyes on him, he claims, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (4:21). Jesus thereby claims to be the one about whom the prophet Isaiah spoke. And Jesus’ ministry, narrated hereafter, will demonstrate it. Jesus’ brief message leaves the people in awe, wondering how this man, someone they have known his entire life, could be saying such grand things (4:22). It is perhaps this hint of doubt in the audience that causes Jesus to speak sharply, saying that he is not welcome in his own hometown (4:24).

Whatever slight offence Jesus may have caused turns to rage against him when he recalls familiar stories of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, known to his audience in the Scriptures (4:24–27). In these stories, Jesus points out that God sometimes sends his blessings away from his own people, to outsiders. Jesus thereby suggests that his own townspeople have rejected him and therefore will not receive the good news he spoke of from the prophet Isaiah. In their rage, the crowd attempts

to kill Jesus by throwing him from a cliff, but he miraculously escapes (4:30).

Simeon's warning to Mary has come to pass: Jesus *is* a sign to be contested (2:34).

2.4.3 Exegetical Analysis

Scholars generally agree that Luke's account of Jesus' ministry in Nazareth is 'programmatic' for Luke-Acts and, as Marshall says, "...contains many of the main themes of Lk.-Acts *in nuce*."⁵⁶ This includes the theme of perception, as John Darr concisely notes:

...[Luke 4] effectively raises the same issues [as Acts 8:26–40] in the reader's mind by drawing attention to various aspects of perception: reading (v. 16); blindness and recovery of sight (v. 18); focusing (*atenizontes*) of the eyes (v. 20); fulfilling in the ears (v. 21); witness (*emarturoun*) (v. 22); and 'wondering' (*ethaumazon*) about what has been heard (v. 22).⁵⁷

Darr's primary contention is that this scene raises a question for the authorial audience as it relates to Scripture: "How then are we to hear?" or "How am I supposed to be reading?"⁵⁸ Compare this to the question raised at the outset, "How can one recognise the certainty concerning the things 'fulfilled among us'?" (cf. Luke 1:4), or the questions of Zechariah and Mary, "By what can I know this?" (1:18) and "How can this be?" (1:34). The narrative thus continues to entertain questions related to correct perception of God's plan revealed in the Scriptures.

More specifically, in Luke 4 the narrative raises these hermeneutical questions about how the Scriptures—here Isa 61:1–2/58:6—relate to Jesus. Jesus

⁵⁶ Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 178; Cf. Jack Sanders who says, "This scene is 'programmatic' for Luke-Acts, as one grows almost tired of reading in the literature of the passage..." (Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* [London: SCM Press, 1987], 165). In support of this, it is often noted that Luke has modified his source, Mark (6:1–6), moving forward and expanding the account of Jesus' ministry in the Nazareth synagogue.

⁵⁷ Darr, "Watch How You Listen"; Cf. Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness*, 173–79.

⁵⁸ Darr, "Watch How You Listen," 90.

claims, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”⁵⁹ The crowd’s initial positive response (4:22) may imply that they correctly understood this as a claim by Jesus to *be* the messianic agent, but Jesus’ harsh response and their eventual rejection of him suggests something was amiss in their understanding. Were they too inward-looking, hoping mostly or only for personal gain?⁶⁰ Or had they failed to fully understand the nature of Jesus’ messianic ministry as universal (explaining why Jesus turns to describe the ministries of Elijah and Elisha)?⁶¹ In any case, the narrative suggests that the negative response to Jesus was normative for God’s prophets (4:24).⁶²

A number of points related to perception are sufficiently clear: (1) Correctly perceiving Jesus’ identity and ministry as the Messiah is directly connected with a correct reading (and hearing) of Scripture; (2) Relatedly and by implication, Jesus (and the narrative of Luke-Acts) provides such a correct reading of Scripture; (3) Understanding Jesus as fulfilling Scripture is not as simple as an initial positive response to his messianic claim (cf. 8:13); and (4) In Jesus’ first public ministry scene in the narrative, Simeon’s prophetic word rings out: when the Messiah is encountered, ‘the opinions of many hearts [are] revealed’ (2:35).⁶³

⁵⁹ Darr posits a connection between “in your ears” here, “fulfilled among [en] us” in Luke 1:1–4, and the kingdom of God as “in you” (17:20–21). He implies that the preposition here adds to the significance of the parallels but this link is tenuous. *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶⁰ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 69.

⁶¹ Nolland rightly notes that *θωμμάζω* in Luke “...always refers to something less than or not yet as developed as proper belief in Jesus” (*Luke 1–9:20*, 1:198).

⁶² Recently, Monique Cuany has outlined a slightly modified reading of this passage that, she claims, is more coherent than the common view outlined above. In short, she argues that the proverbial statement of v. 23 is in fact what the audience should say, i.e., the audience should ask Jesus to heal them as he did for the people of Capernaum. But the audience rejects this because to accept Jesus’ healing would be to admit their need of healing and repentance, that they are needy and sick. Since Cuany’s reading is compatible with the argument above as it regards perception, it will not be further engaged (“Physician, Heal Yourself!”—Jesus Challenge to His Own,” *NovT* 58 [2016]: 347–68).

⁶³ Tannehill draws the same connection between Simeon’s word to Mary (2:34–35) and the rejection at Nazareth. In fact, Tannehill suggests that Jesus’ harsh response was precisely because he

The details of the Isaiah text that Jesus reads also include the rhetoric of perception in the messianic ministry of proclaiming ‘recovery of sight to the blind’ (τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν) (Luke 4:18; Isa 61:1). While Jesus’ ministry in Luke includes the physically blind (e.g., 18:35), the larger narrative of Luke-Acts suggests that there is a spiritual dimension to the recovery of sight, both through the explicit metaphorical use of sight and blindness for spiritual perception (e.g., 8:10; 10:21–24; 19:44; Acts 26:18; 28:25–27) and through the juxtaposition of physical sight and blindness where issues of *spiritual* perception loom large (e.g., Luke 9:7–9; 18:35–43; 19:1–10).⁶⁴ Further evidence for this is found in the Nazareth scene itself, in the misperception—the implied spiritual blindness—of those who reject Jesus in Nazareth.⁶⁵

2.4.4 Synthesis

In the story of Jesus’ Nazareth sermon, the audience learns that perceiving Jesus aright involves a correct understanding of Scripture (cf. Luke 24:44–47; Acts 8:26–40). Such an understanding can be gained from a faithful interpreter like Jesus or, by implication, from Luke’s narrative (cf. Luke 1:1–4). Given the initially positive response to Jesus’ message but ultimate rejection of him, the audience is also warned

knew what they did not, their true attitude, “...resistance to God’s purpose combined with jealous possessiveness” (*Narrative Unity*, 69).

⁶⁴ Susan R. Garrett also connects the language of “release” in Jesus’ Scripture reading to the new exodus motif in Isaiah, and especially to the notion of release from the bondage of Satan (e.g., through exorcisms as Luke depicts them, but ultimately through Jesus’ resurrection and ascension) (“Exodus from Bondage: Luke 9:31 and Acts 12:1–24,” *CBQ* 52.4 [1990]: 661–63); cf. Susan R. Garrett, *The Demise of the Devil: Magic and the Demonic in Luke’s Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), esp. 46–57. I find the argument about the context of Isaiah agreeable, but Garrett may overplay the centrality of Satan in Luke’s narrative. Further, the “cosmic” impact of Jesus’ death and resurrection seems to owe too much to other texts of the New Testament (cf. Garrett’s citations, e.g., “Exodus from Bondage”, 669), Luke 10:18–19 notwithstanding.

⁶⁵ Cf. Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness*, esp. 177–79.

that a positive reception of Jesus can be temporary, as will be clearly illustrated in the Parable of the Sower (esp. 8:12, 13).

In Nazareth, the reader also encounters the first major opposition to Jesus in his public ministry, recalling Simeon's prophetic word to Mary, that when people encounter the Messiah, who is a 'sign to be contested', 'the opinions of many hearts will be revealed' (2:34–35). Further, this kind of rejection of God's prophets is normative (4:24). The irony of encountering such misperception in his hometown, however, is that Jesus' messianic ministry is described, in part, as restoring sight to the blind (4:18). The inability to 'see', however, Luke will go on to show, is not outside of God's plan, as shown by the Parable of the Sower, the subject of the next section.

2.5 Parable of the Sower and the Lamp (Luke 8:4–21)

The Parable of the Sower and the Lamp is one of the most substantial sections of Luke-Acts expounding the theme of perception. The passage repeats important concepts already introduced—a divided response to the Messiah, insider-outsider categories in terms of perception, divine revelation, and the importance of human listening—and these are developed further. Specific obstacles to perception are given, represented especially by the first three 'soils' of the Parable of the Sower. The role of secrecy and revelation is also emphasised. And a new factor of perception, the character of the heart, is introduced.

2.5.1 Passage and Translation (Luke 8:10, 15, 18)

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· ὑμῖν δέδοται γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῖς δὲ
λοιποῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς, ἵνα
βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσιν

καὶ ἀκούοντες μὴ συνιῶσιν. (8:10)

And he said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest [they] are in parables, in order that:

‘Seeing they will not see

And hearing they will not hear.’”

τὸ δὲ ἐν τῇ καλῇ γῇ, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἵτινες ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον κατέχουσιν καὶ καρποφοροῦσιν ἐν ὑπομονῇ. (8:15)

And [the seed] on the good soil: These are those who, having heard the word with a good and noble heart, hold it fast and bear fruit with endurance.

Βλέπετε οὖν πῶς ἀκούετε· ὃς ἂν γὰρ ἔχῃ, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ· καὶ ὃς ἂν μὴ ἔχῃ, καὶ ὃ δοκεῖ ἔχειν ἀρθήσεται ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ. (8:18)

Therefore watch how you listen: for whoever has, to him [more] will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he supposes to have will be taken from him.

2.5.2 Literary Context

From the Nazareth scene in which Jesus’ paradigm for ministry is set out (Luke 4:18–19), he begins to minister, proclaiming the good news and healing throughout Galilee. His ministry is especially directed toward the needy and those of otherwise marginal status, as anticipated in Mary’s Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55), the Isaiah 61:1–2 reading (Luke 4:18–19), and the examples of Elijah and Elisha cited by Jesus (Luke 4:23–27). The crowds who encounter Jesus are typically amazed by him. Even so, not unlike the initial positive response of the synagogue audience in Nazareth, these perceptions of Jesus appear incomplete. For example, in Capernaum, the amazed crowd asks, “What is this message?” (4:36)—the narrative again entertains questions of perception. Simon Peter, upon witnessing Jesus’ power through a catch of fish, perceives *something* of Jesus’ identity when he responds, “Depart from me because I am a sinful man, Lord” (5:8). Upon seeing Jesus raise a dead man to life, the audience, gripped by fear, praises God and declares that Jesus is a ‘great prophet’

and that ‘God has visited his people’ (7:16; cf. 1:68; 19:44). John the Baptist asks of Jesus, “Are you the coming one or should we expect another?” Here the narrative raises another explicit question. Jesus’ response is to allude to the fulfilment of Isaiah 61:1–2, affirming that he is indeed *that* one.

To John the Baptist’s inquiry, Jesus also replies, “Blessed is the one who is not offended by me” (7:23). As anticipated by Simeon’s warning to Mary that the Messiah would be a ‘sign to be contested’ (2:34), Jesus’ ministry has also been met with rejection, first in Nazareth from those in his hometown, and later from the religious leaders. After healing a paralytic and declaring his sins forgiven, Jesus becomes ‘aware’ (ἐπιγινούς) of the ‘opinions’ (διαλογισμούς) in the hearts (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις) of the scribes and Pharisees (5:21–22; cf. 6:8).⁶⁶ The reader is also aware of their thoughts since the narrator makes these explicit in 5:21, where two questions about Jesus’ identity are raised. The verbal parallels to Simeon’s statement that the coming of the Messiah will result in the revelation of the ‘opinions of many hearts’ (ἐκ πολλῶν καρδιῶν διαλογισμοί) (2:35) suggests that the reader should connect the two.

The divisions exposed by Jesus’ ministry continue to come to the fore. A tax collector, Levi, throws a reception attended by Jesus (5:29) which raises more questions from the scribes and Pharisees (5:30). The contrast of tax collectors and sinners, who are here viewed positively, with the religious leaders and the ‘righteous’ is made more explicit by Jesus’ response (5:31–32). Conflict continues and then escalates when the scribes and Pharisees are depicted as ‘watching’ Jesus *in order to*

⁶⁶ An examination of Jesus’ perception, especially of the thoughts of others, lies outside the scope of this study. For a recent discussion, see Collin Blake Bullard, *Jesus and the Thoughts of Many Hearts: Implicit Christology and Jesus’ Knowledge in the Gospel of Luke*, LNTS 530 (London and New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015).

accuse him (6:7). Luke uses this verb for ‘watch’ (παρατηρέω) three other times, each for a sort of malicious watching (Luke 14:1; 20:20; Acts 9:24). By the end of the scene, Jesus’ opponents are filled with ‘fury’ (ἔνολας) and plotting against him (6:11). Hearing Jesus describe John the Baptist’s ministry in Isaianic terms (7:26–28), the audience is divided into two. On the one hand are those ‘people’ and ‘tax collectors’ who ‘affirmed God’s uprightness’ (ἐδικαίωσαν) by being baptised by John, whose ministry was to prepare the people to receive their Messiah (7:29).⁶⁷ On the other hand are the Pharisees and lawyers who ‘rejected God’s purpose for themselves’ by rejecting John’s baptism (7:30).⁶⁸ The contrast between the religious leaders and the marginalised is further highlighted by the ‘sinful’ woman’s anointing of Jesus with perfume (7:36–50). Her sins are proclaimed as forgiven (7:48) which leads the religious leaders at the table to ask, again, ‘Who is this?’ (7:49). The religious leaders, then, are increasingly characterised as those who *misperceive* Jesus.⁶⁹

Much of Jesus’ teaching in 6:20–49 has implications for perception. Who are those who perceive correctly? Those who hear and obey (6:27, 46–47), who do not follow blind guides (6:39), or who do not allow their vision to be clouded by hypocrisy (6:41–42). Thus the reader arrives at the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp, a section which emphasises the significance of *hearing* God’s word with a ‘good heart’ (8:15), watching ‘how you listen’ (8:18), and hearing and doing the ‘word of God’ (8:21). Between the narration of the parable and its explanation is a key passage on perception, suggesting that God has a role in producing understanding in his people (Luke 8:10). Indeed, this section “...constitute[s] the

⁶⁷ BDAG s.v. “δικαίωω.”

⁶⁸ Cf. the other use of ἀθετέω in Luke-Acts, in Luke 10:16 where Jesus says, “...he who rejects Me rejects the one who sent me.”

⁶⁹ Cf. Darr, *On Character Building*, 85–126.

longest Lukan passage in which Jesus directly and continuously addresses the issue of perception.”⁷⁰

2.5.3 Exegetical Analysis

This section of Luke (8:4–21) is primarily a distilling and unifying of Mark 4:1–25 around the concept of *hearing* in order to bring issues of perception into sharper focus.⁷¹ The content of the parable is a simple description of the act of sowing seed on four different kinds of soil with four different results, the last of which is positive and exemplary. Nolland rightly calls attention to the abnormalities of the specifics of the parable:

Just as the yield is extravagant, so is the sowing practice. There is an unusual generosity, almost a joyous abandon about this sower’s technique: he is not eking out a living, but sowing seed of extraordinary fecundity. He feels no need to apportion carefully his supply of seed grain; he will soon have almost more than he knows what to do with!⁷²

Although Luke does not here include Mark’s other parables illustrating the extreme growth of the kingdom (Mark 4:26–34), the ‘kingdom of God’ is clearly in view.

First, Luke 8:1 sets the broader scene: Jesus is moving, city to city, ‘preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God’ (κηρύσσων καὶ εὐαγγελιζόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ). Second, implicit in Jesus’ explanation of the purpose of parables—to hide ‘the mysteries of the kingdom of God’ (8:10)—is that the parable

⁷⁰ Darr, “Watch How You Listen,” 99; Green’s observation is similar: “That genuine ‘hearing’ is the principal theme of this narrative section is evident from the melody that weaves its way through the sometimes disparate material” (*Luke*, 322).

⁷¹ As Nolland remarks: “Luke manipulates the Markan materials in various ways to create a unified scene in vv. 4–21 and to establish a more restricted and focused set of concerns” (*Luke* 1–9:20, 1:370).

⁷² *Ibid.*, 1:372.

itself illustrates something about the kingdom. Third, the ‘word of God’, represented by seed (8:11), is a synonym for Jesus’ message about the kingdom.⁷³

In Luke-Acts, the ‘kingdom of God’ is multifaceted. It is described as present or near in the ministry of Jesus—its nearness is related to Jesus’ appearance on earth (Luke 9:27; 10:9, 11; 11:20; 17:20, 21). It is hidden or appears small initially, but will be revealed with power later (Luke 8:10–17; cf. 13:18–21).⁷⁴ But the kingdom is also something that Jesus will go away to receive before returning again (Luke 19:11–15; 23:42; cf. 22:29–30). In his resurrection and ascension, Jesus ascends to the throne of David (Acts 2, esp. 2:36; cf. Luke 1:33; 2:11) and reigns in the (church’s) present.⁷⁵ And yet the kingdom is to be consummated in the future (Luke 11:2; 13:28, 29; 14:15; 21:31; 22:16, 18, 29–30; 23:51; Acts 1:6; 14:22).⁷⁶ To preach the kingdom is to call people to repent and align themselves with Jesus, God’s Messiah, anointed to bring good news of restoration (Luke 4:18–19; 4:43; 9:2, 11, 60, 62; 12:31, 32; 16:16; 18:16, 17, 24, 25, 29; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23,

⁷³ Cf. Luke 4:43–44 where the summary of Jesus’ preaching of the kingdom of God is followed with a scene of a crowd listening to him, “listening to the word of God” (5:1). In Acts, the phrase also refers to the Christian message. Cf. *Ibid.*, 1:221.

⁷⁴ Keener comments: “[Jesus’] claim also suggests that he expected to play a role in the kingdom, already active in a hidden way in the present (Luke 13:18–30)” (*Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: Introduction and 1:1–2:47*, vol. 1 [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012], 673); Compare Conzelmann’s similar statement: “[the kingdom’s nearness] is not part of the preaching, but only of the secret instruction of the disciples” (*The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell [New York: Harper, 1961], 114).

⁷⁵ For a helpful summary of the Davidic christology of Luke-Acts and its connection to the kingdom and the church, see Scott W. Hahn, “Kingdom and Church in Luke-Acts: From Davidic Christology to Kingdom Ecclesiology,” in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation*, ed. Craig Bartholomew, Joel B. Green, and Anthony C. Thiselton, *Scripture & Hermeneutics* 6 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 294–326 and literature cited. cf. Mark L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology*, JSNTSup 110 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); Peter Doble, “Luke 24.26,44—songs of God’s Servant: David and His Psalms in Luke-Acts,” *JSNT* 28.3 (2006): 267–283.

⁷⁶ Most scholars recognise this dual present-future perspective in the Gospels. Cf. Norman Perrin, *The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 185–201; Stephen S. Smalley, “Spirit, Kingdom and Prayer in Luke-Acts,” *NovT* 15.1 (1973): esp. 62–64; For a helpful discussion, see Keener, *Acts*, 1:670–74, 682–84 and literature cited.

31; cf. Luke 9:20–27).⁷⁷ Further, recognising Jesus as the Messiah is one aspect of such alignment (as Luke 8—9 suggests) (cf. Luke 24:44–47; Acts 2:36; 28:25–31).

The immediate scene of the parable is set in verse 4, depicting a large crowd gathering together in one location from multiple cities. The genitive absolute suggests the stimulus, not only the timing, of the parable: “When a great crowd was gathering and coming to him from city to city, he spoke through a parable”

(Συνιόντος δὲ ὄχλου πολλοῦ καὶ τῶν κατὰ πόλιν ἐπιπορευομένων πρὸς αὐτὸν εἶπεν διὰ παραβολῆς) (8:4).⁷⁸ It seems likely, then, that the diversity of soils in the parable, representing the diversity of people and their receptiveness to the kingdom message, corresponds to the diversity of the crowd that has gathered. Thus Jesus’ parable is set up to deal with the nature of how the kingdom message is broadcast and received among the peoples.⁷⁹

After Jesus gives the parable proper, his disciples ask him what it means (8:9). Where Luke’s source depicts Jesus’ surprise at their lack of understanding after he explains the purpose of parables generally (Mark 4:13), Luke’s Jesus simply explains: “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest [they] are in parables” (8:10). This is followed by a partial quote of Isaiah 6:9 (where Mark’s quotation also includes a portion of Isaiah 6:10) as an explanation of the hiddenness of the ‘mysteries’: “Seeing they will not see, and

⁷⁷ Conzelmann, *Theology*, 113–25.

⁷⁸ The genitive absolute participial construction could indicate causation, but even if it is temporal (as is usually the case), the gathering crowd appears to be a stimulus for speaking διὰ παραβολῆς. Cf. Wallace, *Grammar*, 655; Nolland suggests a similar interpretation when he says, “The present participles hint, perhaps, that the parable is spoken with reference to the gathering crowd as much as it is to them” (*Luke 1–9:20*, 1:373).

⁷⁹ Green, *Luke*, 323–24.

hearing they will not hear” (8:10).⁸⁰ This statement appears to remove the agency for understanding away from the recipient of Jesus’ teaching: either they are granted to know or else ‘the mysteries’ remain hidden.⁸¹ This sits in tension, however, with the implication from the parable’s explanation (8:11–15), reinforced in verse 18 with the imperative to ‘watch how you listen’ (Βλέπετε οὗν πῶς ἀκούετε), that one has control over one’s understanding (or ‘hearing’) of the word of God. Such tension between human agency and divine providence is likewise present in other passages related to perception (e.g., 9:43b–45; 18:31–34; Acts 28:25–28). It is best at this stage to let this tension stand.⁸²

How does Jesus’ initial response in Luke 8:10 to the disciples’ inquiry fit into the larger scene? Is it a general comment about the nature of Jesus’ teaching ‘in parables’, an exposition of the parable, and/or a more specific comment about why Jesus should offer an explanation of this particular parable to the disciples? These options, which are not mutually exclusive, have varying implications for understanding perception in the narrative, and thus demand some delineation. First, Luke 8:10 could be a general commentary from Jesus on why his teaching is enigmatic—to keep the mysteries of the kingdom hidden from some—before he gives an explanation of this specific parable.⁸³ Perhaps this is to address why the disciples do not understand the parable, i.e., because the parable is intended to

⁸⁰ Note that the idea of forgiveness that is left out from Isaiah 6:10 is present in Luke 8:12 (Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 321).

⁸¹ Nolland is correct to supply “the mysteries” as the elided subject in the clause τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς (*Luke 1–9:20*, 1:379).

⁸² As Frein points out, these tensions help create suspense in the narrative (“Misunderstanding,” 338).

⁸³ Nolland argues that ἐν παραβολαῖς should be construed with “almost adjectival force”, as “obscure, like a riddle, enigmatic” (Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 1:380).

conceal.⁸⁴ This sits somewhat awkwardly, however, with the assertion that the disciples have been ‘granted to know’ (8:10).

Second, since in Luke the disciples’ question specifically asks about ‘this parable’ (αὕτη... ἡ παραβολή), Luke 8:10 might itself be an exposition of the parable’s meaning. Marshall notes the suitability of the statement in verse 10 to the parable’s meaning:

...the statement of Jesus corresponds very closely to the message of the parable of the sower. The parable has a double function. It makes the point that some people hear the message and fail to apprehend it fully, while others hear it and receive it with understanding and faith, but at the same time it is itself an example of this very fact, being couched in parabolic form. What is stated in parabolic form in 8:4–8 and addressed to the crowds as a summons to them to hear the message, is now stated openly to the disciples in 8:10 as a description of what takes place. ...it is an appropriate exposition of the meaning of the parable of the sower.⁸⁵

A third possibility is that Jesus’ comment in verse 10 describes what he is about to do. In other words, to explain this particular parable’s meaning *is* to ‘grant’ knowledge of the ‘mysteries of the kingdom of God’ to the disciples.⁸⁶ Consider the following in support of this interpretation. The disciples’ question is, in contrast to Mark, about this particular parable (not parables in general).⁸⁷ This would fit the scene well if in fact Jesus’ explanation which follows (8:11–15) is intended only or primarily for his disciples (i.e., those ‘granted to know’). Weighing against this is the possibility that Luke depicts Jesus’ explanation of the parable as addressing the

⁸⁴ Carroll, for instance, says, “Jesus’ reply justifies the query...” (*Luke*, 186).

⁸⁵ Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 323.

⁸⁶ J. Arthur Baird appears to come close to this interpretation in a study whereby he shows “...the rough arithmetic ratio of twice the number of parables explained to the disciples...as to the non-disciples..., and twice the number of parables left unexplained to the non-disciples...as to the disciples.... When we see that this phenomenon is duplicated in all of the main underlying sources except L, the conclusion seems inescapable that here we have inadvertent inner testimony that the principle enunciated in Mark 4:11, 33–34 was indeed the practice of Jesus. He spoke in unexplained parables to those outside, but to the disciples he explained all things” (“A Pragmatic Approach to Parable Exegesis: Some New Evidence on Mark 4:11, 33–34,” *JBL* 76.3 [1957]: 206).

⁸⁷ Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 321; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, SP (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 121.

disciples *and* the crowd.⁸⁸ But this view is likely unduly influenced by Luke's redaction of Mark, where the disciples' inquiry and Jesus' explanation is explicitly set in privacy. In Luke, Jesus responds to the disciples' question by addressing them in the second person plural (ὁμῖν) and differentiates them from 'the rest' (τοῖς λοιποῖς) (Luke 8:10). This suggests a conversation between Jesus and his disciples, even if the crowd is present. When Jesus goes on to give the parable's meaning—which, again, is a response to the *disciples'* question—Luke gives no indication that Jesus has turned his attention from the disciples (cf. 8:19).⁸⁹ Elsewhere Luke depicts similar moments where Jesus addresses the disciples directly in the midst of a larger scene of teaching crowds (e.g., 9:43b–45; 10:23–24; 12:1, 22; 16:1; 17:1; 18:31).⁹⁰ If this third interpretation is correct, an important implication follows: part of how 'the mysteries of the kingdom of God' are revealed is through Jesus' exposition of otherwise opaque truths (as in Luke 8:11–15, 16–18; cf. 24:27, 44–47; Acts 8:30–35; 17:2–3).

On any of the above interpretations, 'granted to know' (ὁμῖν δέδοται γινῶναι) (Luke 8:10) implies God's agency. This is supported by similar passages in Luke that are more explicit about God's role in human perception (cf. Luke 10:21–24; 24:45; cf. Acts 16:14), as well as the original context of the Isaiah citation, where the prophet's message is intended by God, in part, to encourage the obduracy of the people as a kind of judgment. Isaiah, like Luke-Acts, suggests God's agency in the

⁸⁸ Nolland compares other instances where Luke's "preference" is that Jesus speaks to the disciples within earshot of others (e.g., 6:20; 12:1; 16:1) (*Luke 1–9:20*, 1:379). See further below.

⁸⁹ Green argues that since Luke does not explicitly narrate a scene change, the second person plural address is not determinative. Even so, he concludes that Jesus' answer is "directed to the disciples" (*Luke*, 326); Marshall sees the disciples being addressed through and including 8:16–18 (*Gospel of Luke*, 327).

⁹⁰ In Luke 12:41, Peter asks Jesus whether he is addressing a parable to 'us' or 'everyone' (πρός πάντας), suggesting to the audience that it was not always clear to the disciples who Jesus was addressing.

misperceptions of the people (Isa 6:9–10; 29:9–10; 42:18–20; 43:8; 44:18; 63:17)

and the process of understanding (Isa 32:3–4; 35:5; 42:7, 16; 49:9; 61:1). In his study of the obduracy motif in Isaiah and the Gospels, Evans summarises:

...obduracy in the book of Isaiah is meant to be understood as a condition, brought on variously by arrogance, immorality, idolatry, injustice, and false prophecy, that renders God's people incapable of discerning God's will. This inability leads to judgment and calamity. However, it is also understood to be a condition that God brings about himself, as part of his judgment upon his wayward people. But Isaiah...announces that after the judgment, there is restoration, in which perception returns (attended by righteousness, justice, and trust in God).⁹¹

At this point in the narrative, how these themes will play out in Luke-Acts remains to be seen. In the immediate context, however, Luke employs the Isaianic citation to explain the purpose (ἵνα) of Jesus' parables, namely to keep the 'mysteries of the kingdom of God' hidden.⁹²

The not-so-subtle determinism implied here appears to have led many commentators to seek a mitigating interpretation that too often sands off the corners of Luke's narrative. Carroll's question and comments serve as a useful example and therefore deserve repeating:

Is it God's purpose to hide truth from some human beings? That is the plain sense of this purpose clause [in Luke 8:10]... Yet, as the image of the lamp in Luke 8:16–17 will show, ultimately nothing has been hidden except for the purpose of becoming visible. ...God's ways and work, whether presented in Jesus' speech or enacted in Jesus' actions, can be perceived as such only in the hearing and seeing of faith. The Gospel began on this note (with the contrast between Mary's trusting response and Zechariah's sceptical response to revelation in 1:18–20, 38), and Luke's second volume will end on it (Acts

⁹¹ Craig A. Evans, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6:9–10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation*, JSOTSup 64 (JSOT Press, 1989), 46.

⁹² Commentators often wrestle with this use of ἵνα, not least because of the theological implications. It seems best to take it straightforwardly as introducing a purpose clause, although the "result" of concealment might also be in view. This need not exclude Nolland's suggestion that the fulfilment of Scripture is in view (*Luke 1–9:20*, 1:380). Cf. Carroll, *Luke*, 186. C. H. Dodd famously concluded that this use of Isa 6:9–10 reflects a "testimonium" to Jewish rejection of the gospel (*According to the Scriptures: The Sub-Structure of New Testament Theology* [London: Nisbet, 1952], 38–39). Its use in Acts 28:26–27, discussed later, may support this conclusion, which lies outside of the purview of this thesis' literary approach.

28:26–28, with its more complete quotation of Isa 6:9–10, culminating in the image of believing audition by Gentiles). God sends the prophet and Messiah not to keep the people from perceiving but to call Israel to faith—faith that receives the divine offer of salvation. However, not all hear and see in faith: a divided people is in the making.⁹³

It must be said that Carroll’s reference to a ‘divided people...in the making’, as well as the connection to Zechariah’s and Mary’s faith responses, is exactly right—a point emphasised earlier. But two interpretative moves are suspect. First, using the ‘revelation’ motif from Luke 8:16–17 to suggest that “...even divinely purposed concealment is ultimately in the service of disclosure” may try too hard to resolve the tension between divine providence and human culpability in Luke 8:10, even if that interpretation of 8:17 is correct.⁹⁴ Second and relatedly, a false dichotomy is implied—and therefore unnecessarily resolved—in Carroll’s line, ‘not to keep the people from perceiving but to call Israel to faith’.⁹⁵ As with Isaiah, and throughout Israel’s Scriptures, God uses his prophets to *simultaneously* call Israel to faith while, in judgment, hardening the hearts of (some of) the hearers.⁹⁶ Letting the theological tension stand, as Luke’s narrative does here, may diminish the theological coherence sought by modern interpreters, but it nevertheless raises the stakes of the culminating imperative—‘Watch how you listen’ (8:18).⁹⁷ This is anticipated already in Jesus calling out, “Let the one who has ears hear” (ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω) (8:8).⁹⁸

⁹³ Carroll, *Luke*, 186. Luke 8:16–18 will receive further comment below.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁹⁶ See Isa 6:9–10; 29:9–10; 42:18–20; 43:8; 44:18; 63:17; Jer 5:21–23; Ezek 12:2–3; Zech 7:11–12; Mic 4:12; Hab 1:5; cf. Exod 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:20, 27; 11:10; Deut 28:28; 29:1–3; 1 Sam 9:23; 16:14; 17:14; 18:10; 19:9; 1 Kgs 22:20–23; 2 Chr 30:8, 12; Psalms 81:11–13; Prov 29:1. Many of these passages are brought together in Evans, *To See and Not Perceive*, 47–51.

⁹⁷ Refreshing, then, is the call of Ruth Ann Foster and William D. Shiell: “Interpretations of these troubling texts [OT obduracy texts] should maintain a paradox between the role of Yahweh and the role of the people in the hardening” (“The Parable of the Sower and the Seed in Luke 8:1–10: Jesus Parable of Parables,” *RevExp* 94 [1997]: 261).

⁹⁸ The imperfect ἐφώνει may well have an iterative sense, i.e., “called out repeatedly”. Cf. Darr, “Watch How You Listen,” 99.

Jesus' explanation of the parable to his disciples, which is at least part of their 'being granted to know' (see above), clarifies that each soil represents a scenario in which the message of the kingdom, the word of God, is heard (*ἀκούω* in each case, 8:12, 13, 14, 15), and is ultimately either productive (8:15) or not (8:12, 13, 14). The obstacles to the desired outcome of a seed that grows and multiplies are represented explicitly by the first three soils, and these may be seen as obstacles to perception: (1) In the seed 'beside the road' (*οἱ...παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν*), the devil 'takes the word from their hearts' (*αἶρει τὸν λόγον ἀπὸ τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν*) so that they will not believe and be saved (*ἵνα μὴ πιστεύσαντες σωθῶσιν*) (8:12); (2) In the seed 'on the rock' (*οἱ...ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας*), the word is received 'with joy' (*μετὰ χαρᾶς*) and they believe for a season (*οἱ πρὸς καιρὸν πιστεύουσιν*), but in a season of temptation (*ἐν καιρῷ πειρασμοῦ*) they fall away (8:13); and (3) In the seed that fell 'in the thorns' (*τὸ...εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας*), these are unable to 'bear fruit to maturity' (*τελεσφοροῦσιν*) because they are 'choked' (*συμπνίγονται*) by anxieties, riches, and the pleasures of life (8:14).

In the first soil (beside the road), perception is affected by the Devil who takes the word from the hearts of the hearers.⁹⁹ In Luke-Acts, the Devil (or Satan), as the enemy of God (Luke 10:19), is able to tempt (Luke 4:1–13), deceive (Acts 13:10), and oppress (Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38) people. He has a kingdom over which he reigns and attempts to prevent people from turning to God (Luke 11:18; Acts 13:10; 26:18; cf. Luke 10:18).¹⁰⁰ Sometimes his actions against people are described in very direct, even violent terms. In Luke 8:12, he takes away the word of God from

⁹⁹ As Nolland says, "Luke naturally thinks of what has been heard as stored in the heart (Luke 1:66; 2:19, 51; cf. 2 Esdr 8:6), so that is where the Devil must take it from" (*Luke 1–9:20*, 1:384–85).

¹⁰⁰ Although there should remain some question as to whether Satan's claim in Luke 4:6 can be trusted.

the hearts of people. In Luke 13:16, he has ‘bound’ (ἔδησεν) a woman by physically handicapping her for 18 years. In Luke 22:3, Satan ‘enters’ (εἰσῆλθεν) Judas who immediately moves to betray Jesus. Shortly after, in Luke 22:31, Jesus warns Peter that Satan has asked to ‘sift’ him ‘like wheat’ (ἰδοὺ ὁ σατανᾶς ἐξητήσατο ὑμᾶς τοῦ σινιάσαι ὡς τὸν σῖτον).¹⁰¹ In Acts 5:3, Satan fills the heart of Ananias, leading him to an act of deception that costs Ananias his life.

Against the Devil’s coercive actions toward people (and God) stand God’s appointed ministers. While the Devil is associated with making ‘crooked the straight ways of the Lord’ (Acts 13:10), John the Baptist is called to make them straight, preparing the people for the Messiah (Luke 3:4–6; cf. 1:16–17). The Messiah, Jesus, resists the Devil’s temptations (Luke 4:1–12), reverses the oppressive debilitations of various evil spirits through healing (e.g., Luke 11:20; cf. Luke 4:18–19; 7:22–23), proclaims the message of *God’s* kingdom (e.g., Luke 4:18–19), and enlists his followers to do the same (e.g., Luke 10:1–24; Acts 26:18).

On the whole, however, Luke offers little detail about the Devil’s direct role in preventing people from understanding and believing. Luke 8:12 indicates his role in preventing some from understanding, and Jesus’ vision of Satan’s fall in Luke 10 is described alongside of God’s concealing and revealing work through the commissioned work of the seventy.¹⁰² In Acts 26, the dominion of Satan is equated with darkness and the implicit condition of the blindness of people, hence the

¹⁰¹ Cf. Luke 22:52–53 where the actions of the chief priests and temple officials against Jesus bring Jesus to say, “...This is your hour and the power of darkness” (ἡ ὥρα καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία τοῦ σκοτός).

¹⁰² Frank Dicken argues that the Devil grants authority to rulers, especially Herod, who Dicken argues is a composite character (*Herod as a Composite Character in Luke-Acts*, WUNT 2.375 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014], 132–65). While Dicken’s summary of the Devil’s characterisation in Luke-Acts largely agrees with my own, briefly outlined above, I do not think Luke so clearly indicates the Devil’s devolvement of power to others; on the connection of Herod to Satan, Dicken appears to lean on Garrett, “Exodus from Bondage,” esp. 666–77, on which see comments in the exegetical section of the Nazareth Sermon, above, and comments just below.

commissioning of Paul ‘to open [the] eyes’ of those needing to turn from Satan’s dominion to God (26:18).¹⁰³ At the end of Luke, Jesus opens the mind of the disciples so that they ‘understand the Scriptures’ about him (Luke 24:45).¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the Lord ‘opens’ Lydia’s heart to receive Paul’s message about Jesus (Acts 16:14). One can say, therefore, that for Luke, the Devil’s oppressive activity is one factor among many others in how or whether people perceive the kingdom message.

In the second (rocky) soil, after joyful reception of the word and a time of believing, a season of trials (*πειρασμοῦ*) results in a falling away (*ἀφίστανται*) (Luke 8:13). Such trials do not necessarily exclude the activity of the Devil (as in Luke 4:12; cf. 8:12), but they also include persecutions and hardships brought about by devotion to Jesus (Luke 22:28; Acts 20:19; cf. Mark 4:17).¹⁰⁵ Elsewhere in Luke, avoidance of temptation is to be a subject of prayer (Luke 11:4; 22:40, 46). As it relates to perception, the implication of the meaning of the second soil is that initial perception and acceptance of Jesus’ message does not necessarily result in enduring faith.

In the third (thorny) soil, hearing the word leads to implicit growth, but the cares, riches, and pleasures of life prevent the maturing of fruit (8:14). As commentators are quick to note, dangers to faith brought about by wealth receive emphasis in Luke-Acts: “...material possessions, and the life that revolves around acquiring and holding on to them, are a lethal enemy to faith (e.g., Luke 12:13–34;

¹⁰³ Garrett, “Exodus from Bondage,” 662. Acts 26:18 envisions the condition of spiritual blindness familiar to us prior to Jesus’ resurrection and ascension, which cuts against Garrett’s schema whereby Jesus’ resurrection and ascension enable an “exodus” in which Satan is defeated. Acts 26 will be taken up further below.

¹⁰⁴ This passage will receive detailed attention below.

¹⁰⁵ Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 1:385.

16:14–15, 19–31; 18:18–25).¹⁰⁶ The danger of cares (μεριμνῶν) (8:12) to hearing the word is later illustrated by Martha who, in contrast to her sister Mary, does not sit at Jesus’ feet to listen to him because she is ‘anxious for’ (μεριμνᾷς) and troubled by many things (10:41).¹⁰⁷ Thus, like the second soil, here is an implication that initial perception does not automatically lead to maturity (cf. 4:22–30). To the obstacle of the Devil’s intervention and trials is added the cares, riches, and pleasures of life.

The first three scenarios stand in stark contrast with the fourth. In the seed ‘in good soil’ (τὸ...ἐν τῇ καλῇ γῇ), the ‘hearing’ is qualified. They hear the word ‘with a good and noble heart’ (ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ) (8:15). As a result, they hold the word fast (κατέχουσιν), and bear fruit with endurance (καρποφοροῦσιν ἐν ὑπομονῇ) (8:15). Further, the original parable suggests an extravagant yield of a hundredfold (ἐκατονταπλάσιον) (8:8). While this multiplication may imply the kind of multiplication-by-witness of the church seen in Acts, the context suggests a stronger parallel is found in the multiplication of knowledge and understanding (see further below).¹⁰⁸

In relation to perception, the interpretation of the fourth soil suggests that the crucial factor in determining the ultimate endurance and productivity of the seed is *the character of the heart*, whether the word is heard ‘with a good and noble heart’ (8:15).¹⁰⁹ Darr summarises the significance:

The central lesson of Lk. 8.4–21 is that fecund reception of the sacred depends on the condition of one’s eyes and ears, which, in turn, depends on one’s heart. Readers are thus encouraged toward introspection... Moving

¹⁰⁶ Carroll, *Luke*, 187.

¹⁰⁷ See “Watch How You Listen,” 101–2.

¹⁰⁸ Contra Darr, *On Character Building*, 53–58.

¹⁰⁹ See Jacques Dupont, “La parabole du semeur dans la version de Luc,” in *Apophoreta: Festschrift für Ernst Haenchen*, BZNW 30 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964), 97–108; cf. Johnson, *Luke*, 133.

forward through Luke and Acts, the reader builds an image of the ideal heart—one that characterizes the ideal reader. This reader loves God and neighbor; has faith; is humble, repentant and loyal; shows compassion and mercy; and practices economic justice (among other virtues).¹¹⁰

In Luke-Acts, the heart (*καρδία*) is related to perception in various ways. The heart is where the innermost thoughts, beliefs, and doubts of a person reside (Luke 1:51; 2:35, 51; 6:45; 8:12; 24:38; Acts 2:26; 8:22; 28:27) and where reflective thought and resolution occur (Luke 1:66; 2:19; 3:15; 5:22; 8:15; 12:45; 21:14; 24:45; Acts 5:4; 7:23, 39; 11:23). One's actions spring from the heart, and thus the character of the heart reveals the goodness or vileness of a person (Luke 6:45; 16:15; 12:34; 16:15; 21:34; Acts 2:46; 4:32; 5:3, 4; 7:51; 8:21, 22; cf. Luke 8:15; Acts 13:22). God knows the true character of the heart, as does Jesus (Luke 5:21–22; 16:15; cf. Luke 2:35; Acts 7:51). The heart can be weighed down with vices and the 'cares of this life' (*μερίμναις βιωτικαῖς*) (Luke 21:34; cf. 8:14; 10:41), influenced by Satan toward evil (Acts 5:3), and otherwise slow to understand spiritual things (Luke 24:25; Acts 28:27). The heart is also a place of emotional response, including response to spiritual truths (Luke 24:32; Acts 2:37; 7:54; 21:13).¹¹¹ God can act upon the heart of a person, to cleanse it (Acts 15:9) and to open it to respond to the gospel (Acts 16:14). One can also oversee the state of one's own heart (Luke 21:34; cf. 8:18 and discussion below). To further understand the implications of the 'good heart' in Luke 8:15, the passage which follows necessitates a closer look.

The Parable of the Lamp with its explanation and following imperative (Luke 8:16–18) continues the theme of hearing and understanding the kingdom message,

¹¹⁰ Darr, "Watch How You Listen," 103.

¹¹¹ This is not always a positive response, e.g., Acts 7:54.

now incorporating visual imagery.¹¹² Luke continues to follow his source, Mark (4:21–25), although in Luke, Jesus is continuing to (primarily) address the disciples.¹¹³ The parable envisions a household in which a lit lamp is not covered but placed on a lampstand so those who come in can see it (8:16). Verse 17 elaborates (γάρ): what is hidden (κρυπτόν and ἀπόκρυφον) will be made known (φανερὸν γενήσεται...γνωσθή...εἰς φανερόν ἔλθῃ). But to what does ‘hidden’ refer? In view of Luke 8:10, it is almost certainly the ‘mysteries of the kingdom God’, which is also the ‘word’ in the Parable of the Sower.¹¹⁴ If this is so, how does the original parable in verse 16 relate? Nolland says, “The lamp that has been lit is the one who has heard the word of God (and responded). ...the lamp in place on the lampstand will be the person living out and therefore making visible the word of God.”¹¹⁵ Reasonable as this interpretation is, a similar but more straightforward construal is that the mysteries of the kingdom correspond to a lamp hidden *for a time*, a light later to be revealed by God (and through his witnesses) openly in the future.¹¹⁶ Thus Luke 8:16–17 refers to the momentary concealment of the mysteries of the kingdom except for a few (e.g., the disciples; cf. 8:10).¹¹⁷ Ironically, the heart of Luke’s message, the scriptural necessity of the messianic suffering, will also be hidden from the disciples at key moments (9:45; 18:34) but later revealed (24:45). Further, the plan of God is to make these mysteries plain in the future through disciples who

¹¹² Carroll, *Luke*, 188.

¹¹³ On Jesus addressing the crowd and/or the disciples, see above. Cf. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 327. Note, too, that on the two-source theory, Luke’s deviations from Mark here that are in common with Matthew may reflect Luke’s use of Q material.

¹¹⁴ See *ibid.*, 328; Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 1:391. Cf. Green who offers another possibility: What is revealed is “how one has heard the word of God”, a fact that cannot be hidden (*Luke*, 329).

¹¹⁵ Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 1:391.

¹¹⁶ Marshall’s two possible interpretations may easily be one. In any case, he rightly says, “...there is a contrast between the veiled revelation in the earthly ministry of Jesus and an open revelation in the future” (*Gospel of Luke*, 328).

¹¹⁷ Cf. Birger Gerhardsson, “Parable of the Sower and Its Interpretation,” *NTS* 14.2 (1968): 190.

share the message they have heard ‘in secret’ openly and, thus, multiply themselves, as is primarily depicted in Acts.¹¹⁸

The imperative that follows sums up Jesus’ instruction to his disciples that began in 8:10: “Therefore watch how you listen” (Βλέπετε οὖν πῶς ἀκούετε) (Luke 8:18). This *is* the purpose of the Parable of the Sower, to call attention to how one listens. In fact, verse 18 mirrors Luke 8:8b: “As he was saying these things [the parable], he would call out, ‘To him with ears, let him hear’” (ταῦτα λέγων ἐφώνει· ὁ ἔχων ὦτα ἀκούειν ἀκούετω). In this light, verse 8 is not simply a call to listen to the parable. It is a call to watch *how* one receives the kingdom message. It *is* the point of the parable. The seriousness of the command in 8:18 is heightened by the platitude that follows: “For to the one who has, (more) will be given; and to the who does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him” (ὁς ἂν γὰρ ἔχῃ, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ· καὶ ὁς ἂν μὴ ἔχῃ, καὶ ὁ δοκεῖ ἔχειν ἀρθήσεται ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ) (Luke 8:18). On the view (above) that verses 16–17 have the concealing and revealing of the ‘mysteries of the kingdom’ in view, it is likely that what is possessed (or not), given (or taken away), is knowledge (and/or further instruction) of the kingdom.¹¹⁹ This compounding of knowledge maps quite nicely onto the productivity of the seed in good soil (8:15). Therefore, verse 18’s ‘more will be given’ likely corresponds to fruitful seed in the good soil.

¹¹⁸ Nolland’s interpretation of v. 17 is apt: “As proverbially all secrets come out, so it is God’s purpose that this secret, the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, now restricted to a privileged few, should become broadly accessible (cf. Acts 2:36)” (*Luke 1–9:20*, 1:391). Marshall emphasises the “missionary element” of Luke’s passage, but is rightly skeptical about connecting those who “enter” the house and “see” (v. 16) with Gentile conversion (*Gospel of Luke*, 328–30). The link is possible (cf. Acts 26:18) but difficult to prove; Cf. Green who offers a near opposite interpretation of v. 17, that it is a “reminder that his teaching is not esoteric but accessible to all” (*Luke*, 329). His reading depends in part on assuming the crowd is part of Jesus’ intended audience at this point.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 330.

The following passage, in which Jesus answers a report that his family wished to see him (ιδεῖν θέλοντές σε) (8:20), then, illustrates the point of the broader context: “My mother and my brothers are those who *hear* the word of God and *do* it” (...οἱ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀκούοντες καὶ ποιοῦντες) (8:21). In the narrative, the audience will encounter others who likewise *wish* to *see* Jesus. Soon Herod reappears, who also ‘seeks to see [Jesus]’ (ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν αὐτόν) (9:9), setting up a later episode in which Herod is brought joy when he finally *sees* Jesus (ιδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν), having wanted to *see* him for a long time (ἐξ ἱκανῶν χρόνων θέλων ἰδεῖν αὐτόν) because he had been hearing about Jesus (ἀκούειν περὶ αὐτοῦ), and *see* Jesus perform a sign (σημεῖον ἰδεῖν) (23:8). Early in the travel narrative Jesus will reflect on the disciples’ ministry and say, “...many prophets and kings wished to see what you see and did not see, and hear what you hear and did not hear” (10:24). Perceiving Jesus, then, involves careful listening.

2.5.4 Synthesis

In summary, the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp is about the ‘how’ of hearing the kingdom message. To the one who hears and understands the message, the word of God, more understanding will be given, i.e., extravagant fruitfulness will follow. The obstacles to hearing are various: the Devil, trials and persecutions, cares, riches, and pleasures all threaten. However, part of how ‘the mysteries of the kingdom of God’ are revealed is through Jesus’ exposition of otherwise opaque truths (8:10). Listening carefully to Jesus, and from the perspective of the audience, to Luke’s narration (cf. 1:1–4), is thus a primary means of understanding. Therefore, one must ‘watch how [one] listen[s]’. Darr’s analysis, cited above, is compelling: The passage encourages

introspection, an inward examination whereby one considers one's own character, the 'condition of one's eyes and ears', the character of the heart. The implication is that one should then align oneself with the values of the kingdom.¹²⁰ Along these lines, Luke includes a simplified version of Mark 3:31–35 in Luke 8:19–20, emphasising the importance of hearing the word of God and doing (or obeying) it (cf. Luke 6:46–48).

The seriousness of the warning to listen is heightened by the insider-outsider dichotomy in the passage. The disciples are recipients of special revelation (8:10) and private teaching (8:11–18). They must not squander this privilege. By implication, Luke's audience, too, has inside knowledge and therefore must heed the command to 'watch how you listen'. While the secrecy of the kingdom message is in one sense kept temporarily (to be revealed more fully after the resurrection) (8:16–17), in another sense it will continue to remain hidden from some (10:21–24; cf. Acts 28:25–28) in keeping with the obduracy motif in Isaiah. Carroll is thus correct to see here a 'divided people...in the making' (cf. Luke 2:34–35).¹²¹ Among those who 'see and do not see' is Herod, to whom this study now turns.

2.6 'Seeing Jesus', the Messiah (Luke 9:7–36)

How does one recognise the certainty of 'the events fulfilled among us'? This is the question that was raised in Luke 1:1–4. Since that time, explicit and implicit questions have been raised, especially concerning the identity of Jesus on account of

¹²⁰ Darr, "Watch How You Listen," 103.

¹²¹ Carroll, *Luke*, 186 (see above for a more complete quotation); Nolland's comment is apt: "People do exhibit a hardened attitude; Scripture anticipates it; and it takes its place within the larger sweep of the plan and purpose of God. ... That some come to know the mysteries of the kingdom while others fail to see the point parallels in scope the outcome of the sower's activity" (*Luke 1–9:20*, 1:380).

his miracles and teaching. In Luke 9, these questions come to a head, first through Herod, who is confused about the rumours he is hearing about this miracle-worker, and second, through the disciples who are pressed by Jesus concerning his identity. Although the disciples correctly identify Jesus as the Messiah (9:20), there are indications that their understanding is still limited (9:33–36). Even so, their recognition of Jesus affirms their status as insiders.

2.6.1 Passages and Translation (Luke 9:7, 9, 20, 27, 35)

Ἦκουσεν δὲ Ἡρώδης ὁ τετραάρχης τὰ γινόμενα πάντα καὶ διηπόρει διὰ τὸ λέγεσθαι...εἶπεν δὲ Ἡρώδης· Ἰωάννην ἐγὼ ἀπεκεφάλισα· τίς δὲ ἐστὶν οὗτος περὶ οὗ ἀκούω τοιαῦτα; καὶ ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν αὐτόν. (9:7, 9)

Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed on account of what was being said... And Herod said, “John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?” And he was seeking to see him.

εἶπεν δὲ αὐτοῖς· ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι; Πέτρος δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· τὸν χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ. (9:20)

And he said, “But who do you say I am?” And Peter, answering, said, “The Messiah of God.”

λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ἀληθῶς, εἰσὶν τινες τῶν αὐτοῦ ἐστηκότων οἳ οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου ἕως ἃν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. (9:27)

But I say to you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.

καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος, αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε. (9:35)

And a voice came out of the cloud saying, “This is my son, the chosen one; Listen to him.”

2.6.2 Literary Context

After the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp (Luke 8:4–21), examined in the previous section, Luke, continuing to follow Mark closely, narrates three stories which demonstrate Jesus’ power: (1) The calming of the storm (Luke 8:22–25); (2) The healing of a demon-possessed man (8:26–39); and (3) The healing of Jairus’ daughter, ‘interrupted’ with the healing of a woman with the issue of blood (8:40–56). Note the contrasting responses of certain characters to Jesus—responses of fear and faith. On the one hand is the lack of faith and fearful response of the disciples to the calming of the storm (8:25) and the fear of the Gerasene townspeople in response to Jesus’ healing of the demoniac (8:35, 38). On the other hand is the devotion and witness of the healed man (8:38, 39), the implied faith of Jairus (8:41; cf. 8:50: “Do not fear; only believe...”), and the bold faith and witness of the woman with an issue of blood (8:47, 48). After these events, Jesus sends his twelve disciples out to preach the good news and heal throughout the villages of Galilee (9:1–6). As will become clearer later in Luke-Acts, Jesus’ followers continue his Spirit-empowered ministry of teaching and healing (cf. Luke 4:18–19; 10:1–16).¹²² Like Jesus, the disciples should anticipate the possibility of rejection (9:6; cf. 2:34–35).

Jesus’ demonstrations of power raise questions brought out by characters about his identity. Thus Luke’s readers cannot escape the theme of perception. The disciples, upon witnessing Jesus calm the storm, ask, “Who then is this, that he commands the wind and the water, and they obey him?” (8:25). Herod, having heard about recent events in Jesus’ ministry, asks, “Who is this about whom I hear such

¹²² Robert F O’Toole, “Parallels between Jesus and His Disciples in Luke-Acts: A Further Study,” *BZ* 27.2 (1983): 195–212; Andrew C. Clark, *Parallel Lives: The Relation of Paul to the Apostles in the Lucan Perspective*, PBTM (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001), 39–49, 63–73.

things?” (9:9). The demons know the answer, identifying Jesus as ‘son of the most high God’ (8:28).¹²³ Jesus asks his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” (9:18), and finally, “But who do *you* say I am?” (9:20). Indeed, these stories of Jesus’ power and questions of Jesus’ identity in Luke 8:22—9:27 have set up this precise question.¹²⁴ Peter, answering Jesus, confesses, “The Messiah of God” (9:20). Peter’s identification of Jesus as the Messiah is then reinforced in the Transfiguration (9:28–36), in which Peter, James, and John glimpse Jesus’ glory and hear God’s voice affirming Jesus’ identity as God’s Son. God’s final word is a command: “Listen to him” (cf. 8:18: “Watch how you listen”). But these direct insights into Jesus’ identity are to remain secret for the time being (9:21, 36; cf. 8:56), known mostly by his small circle of disciples. Yet a number of indications here and to come suggest that even the disciples do not fully understand (8:25; 9:12–13, 33, 45), emphasising the need to ‘listen to him’.

2.6.3 Exegetical Analysis

Prior to Herod’s return to the narrative at Luke 9:7, he has been characterised as ‘the stereotypical wicked ruler’.¹²⁵ Most notably, he imprisoned John the Baptist because the prophet had condemned Herod’s behaviour (3:18–20). Now news of ‘all that was happening’ (τὰ γινόμενα πάντα)—the activity of Jesus’ ministry, if not also the recent activity of the disciples in 9:6—has reached Herod, leaving him perplexed (διηπόρει) on account of rumours that this was the activity of John the Baptist, Elijah,

¹²³ The demons’ knowledge of Jesus, calling him by name and title, is humorously contrasted by Jesus who must ask for their name (Luke 8:30). The demons are ‘nonames’ to Jesus.

¹²⁴ Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 332.

¹²⁵ Darr, *On Character Building*, 137; Frank Dicken has recently argued that the “Herods” in Luke and Acts—two or more historical persons—are presented as a single character, a composite character, who opposes the narrative’s protagonists (*Herod as a Composite*). While I remain undecided about whether or not Herod should be understood as a composite character, Dicken’s emphasis on Luke’s Herods as antagonistic toward the gospel proclamation is helpful.

or another prophet risen from the dead (9:7–9).¹²⁶ Herod’s confusion leads to his desire to ‘see’ Jesus. The imperfective ‘was seeking to see him’ (ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν αὐτόν) (9:9) suggests Herod’s *ongoing* interest in Jesus—likely a malevolent interest in light of Herod’s position and his execution of another prophet, John the Baptist. This also sets up the reader for a dramatic encounter, unique to Luke’s Gospel, between Jesus and Herod at Jesus’ trial later in the narrative (23:8–12).¹²⁷

Through Herod’s perplexity about Jesus’ identity and his desire to *see* him, the reader is encouraged to consider Herod as a negative model of perception, unable to correctly perceive Jesus, an outsider to whom the mysteries of the kingdom remain hidden (cf. 8:10; 10:21, 24).¹²⁸ Likewise, the speculation about Jesus’ identity from the anonymous ‘others’ demonstrate a lack of perception of Jesus as God’s Messiah in spite of valid similarities between Jesus and John the Baptist, Elijah, and the prophets (9:7–8; cf. 9:18–19).¹²⁹

Next, upon the disciples’ return from their ministry (which commenced in 9:6), Jesus takes them to a secluded place near Bethsaida (9:10) for what appears to be private instruction, likely on the subject of his messianic identity in the wake of their recent ministry (cf. 9:18–27). However, the plans are interrupted by crowds seeking ministry from Jesus, who responds with his typical activities of healing and

¹²⁶ Of course, in the case of Elijah, his return would not entail resurrection since he did not die in the first place, scripturally speaking. Note that setting Jesus’ ministry along side that of John the Baptist and the prophets reinforces the scriptural fulfilment of Jesus’ ministry (Luke 4:18–19; 7:22–29); cf. Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 164.

¹²⁷ Bovon, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 1:349; Likewise, Jesus’ followers in Acts will encounter opposition from a “Herod”. As Darr says, “The lesson is clear: if one chooses to be a true witness—one who sees, hears, responds and tells—then one will inevitably encounter a ‘Herod’” (*Herod the Fox*, 208); cf. Dicken, *Herod as a Composite*.

¹²⁸ Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 164. Note, also, that to Mark’s account (Mark 6:14–16) Luke has added the details of Herod’s perplexity and his desire to see Jesus. Similarly, among the Synoptics, only Luke includes the confrontation with Herod at Jesus’ trial (Luke 23:6–12); cf. *ibid.*, 169.

¹²⁹ Heinz Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium, 1 Teil. Kommentar zu Kap. 1,1–9,50*, vol. 1, Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 507–8; Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 167.

speaking about the kingdom of God (9:11). Although the disciples suggest that Jesus should send the crowds away to eat (9:12), Jesus insists that the *disciples* feed the people (9:13). Jesus proceeds to produce a miraculous distribution of food for the crowd that numbers more than 5,000 men (9:14). Like 9:1–6, again Jesus has involved his disciples in ministry, this time, using them to instruct the crowds (9:14–15) and to distribute the food to the people (9:16).¹³⁰ After satisfying the hunger of the crowds, twelve baskets of food remain (9:17). The twelve baskets represent, at minimum, a provision of food for the twelve disciples, who in their recent itinerant ministry were instructed to go *without* bread or money (9:3, 6). Also clear is the fact that this showing of Jesus’ power underscores his messianic identity as the following passage confirms (9:20).¹³¹

The scene changes abruptly in Luke 9:18 to Jesus praying alone with the disciples. Luke’s new scene is adapted from his source’s scene at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27). In bridging the ministry of the Twelve (Luke 9:1–6), Herod’s confusion about Jesus’ identity (9:7–9), and the feeding of the 5,000 (9:10–17) to the present scene, Luke omits a large section of Mark’s material (Mark 6:45—8:30). This results in the absence of material on the disciple’s gross misunderstanding (Mark 8:14–21; cf. Mark 7:18), juxtaposed in Mark with the healing of a blind man whose sight is partially restored before being fully restored, representing the disciples who, at best, only partially see (Mark 8:22–26).¹³² Mark’s portrait of the disciples, especially in

¹³⁰ Bovon, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 1:353.

¹³¹ Less clear is the extent of scriptural overtones—God’s provision for the Twelve Tribes of Israel, the miracles of the prophet Elijah, the provision of manna during the ministry of Moses. Indeed, Moses’ and Elijah’s appearance at the Transfiguration, which in Luke’s narrative follows closely (9:30–33), as well as the narrative’s recent comparisons of Jesus to scriptural prophets make these overtones plausible. For relevant discussion, see *ibid.*, 1:350–61; See also François Bovon, *Studies in Early Christianity*, WUNT 161 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 106–112.

¹³² James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 241.

this section, is decidedly more negative than that of Luke's.¹³³ Even so, in passing over this material, Luke is able to maintain his characterisation of the disciples as insiders who, in spite of not *fully* understanding, are those to whom the mysteries of the kingdom have been revealed.¹³⁴

Jesus is praying in Luke 9:18, an activity that has been and will be associated with significant events in his ministry (3:21; 6:12; 9:28; 22:39–46). Here, Jesus asks the disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” The question and its answer (9:19) echoes not only rumours of his identity and Herod's question introduced in 9:7–9, but the string of similar questions about Jesus that the audience has encountered in the narrative so far:

“Is this not Joseph's son?” (Luke 4:22)

“Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins except God alone?” (5:21)

“Are you the coming one, or should we look for another?” (7:19, 20)

“Who is this who even forgives sins?” (7:49)

“Who then is this, that he commands the wind and the water, and they obey him?” (8:25)

“John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?” (9:9)

“Who do people say that I am?” (9:18)

“Who do you say that I am?” (9:20)

Such direct questions will not reappear until after the travel narrative, during Jesus' trial and crucifixion:

¹³³ This will continue to be the case, as will be shown in the passages to be examined below.

¹³⁴ Note that in Mark, by contrast, the disciples are rebuked for asking the meaning of the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:13), and in spite of the affirmation that the disciples are recipients of special revelation (Mark 4:11–12, citing Isa 6:9–10), their misunderstanding in Mark 8:16 leads Jesus to wonder whether they have hardened hearts, referring again to Isa 6:10. Wrede likewise observes an emphasis in Luke on God's revelation to the disciples in spite of their misunderstanding (*The Messianic Secret*, 168–67).

“If you are the Christ, tell us... Are you therefore the Son of God?” (22:67, 70)

“Are you the king of the Jews?” (23:1)

“Are you not the Messiah?” (23:39)

The private scene with Jesus and his disciples depicted in Luke 9 is the strongest instance of Jesus’ affirmation of the messianic identity to this point. The narrative has affirmed for the audience that Jesus is the Messiah from an early point (e.g., 2:11, 26; 4:41) and certainly does so at the end of the Gospel (e.g., Luke 24:26, 46). In Acts, the apostolic proclamation likewise makes Jesus’ messianic identity explicit (e.g., Acts 2:36, 38; 3:18; 28:31). In Luke’s Gospel, however, Jesus avoids (and sometimes prohibits) the public identification of himself as the Messiah. When the demons identify Jesus as the Son of God, knowing he is the Messiah (4:41), Jesus does not permit them to speak. During his trial and crucifixion, Jesus is likewise elusive about his identity as the Messiah. The Council claims that Jesus considers himself to be a ‘messiah, king’ (23:2). But when pressed about his identity claims (22:70; 23:1, 39, quoted above), Jesus’ answers are ambiguous, amounting to neither a denial nor a strong affirmation. When Jesus himself talks about the figure of the Messiah, he does not explicitly identify himself as such, maintaining third person speech (e.g., 20:41; 24:26, 46). Yet when Peter identifies Jesus as ‘the Messiah of God’ (9:20), Jesus’ instruction not to tell anyone (9:21) amounts to an admission.

For the audience, the questions that characters ask about Jesus’ identity do not serve *primarily* to eliminate options (e.g., a prophet *redivivus*) since the reader has had numerous indications from early on that Jesus *is* the Messiah, Son of God,

etc. (see above).¹³⁵ Rather, the questions reinforce the notion that Jesus' true identity is still a mystery to many (cf. Luke 8:10). Especially in light of Luke 8, the audience is encouraged to consider insider-outsider categories as it relates to perception (recall again Simeon's prophecy in 2:34–35).

This raises the question, what accounts for Peter's knowledge of Jesus' identity? The narrative is not explicit, but earlier acknowledgement of special revelation to the disciples (8:10) and the imperative to listen carefully (8:18) suggests both divine revelation and careful observation would give way to such knowledge.¹³⁶ It is also possible to understand Jesus' prayer in 9:18 as leading to Peter's understanding.¹³⁷ Further, the disciples have not only witnessed powerful miracles in recent days (8:26–56; 9:12–17), but they have also *performed* miracles with Jesus' authorisation (9:1–6).

A second question arises: what accounts for Jesus' command to keep his identity secret (9:21)? In Luke, secrecy of Jesus' true identity is kept within a select circle of disciples and helps establish Luke's insider-outsider distinction.¹³⁸ As will be seen later, at times understanding appears to be withheld even from insiders (Luke 9:45; 18:34) until a time of revelation after the death and resurrection of Jesus, as will be elaborated in the relevant sections below. But another clue is to be found in Luke 9:22 which, continuing the sentence began in verse 21, links the first explicit

¹³⁵ Darr may overplay the rhetorical function of Herod's question in this respect (*Herod the Fox*, 165–70).

¹³⁶ Cf. Green who does not think that recent miracles would have changed their perception given the narrative's silence on that point, as well as previous miracles which did not result in such understanding (*Luke*, 367–68).

¹³⁷ Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 150.

¹³⁸ It should be noted that Luke retains most of the so-called secrecy passages in Mark (Mark 1:25/Luke 4:35; Mark 1:34/Luke 4:41; Mark 1:43–45/Luke 5:14; Mark 5:37–43/Luke 8:51–56; Mark 8:30/Luke 9:21; Mark 9:2–9/Luke 9:28–36), but does not retain a few others (Mark 3:12/Luke 6:19; Mark 7:33–36/no parallel; Mark 8:23–26/no parallel). For a helpful analysis of the issues of the secrecy theme in Mark, see Iverson, “‘Wherever the Gospel Is Preached’: The Paradox of Secrecy in the Gospel of Mark”; cf. Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, esp. 164–80.

passion prediction of the Gospel closely with the command to be silent: "...saying that it is necessary for the Son of Man to suffer many things..." (εἰπὼν ὅτι δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου πολλὰ παθεῖν).¹³⁹ Given the secrecy theme already noted and the link between silence and the passion prediction, the implication could be that talking openly of Jesus as the Messiah will bring about the inevitable suffering prematurely.¹⁴⁰ Or perhaps silence must be maintained because proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah would raise incorrect expectations, making his suffering more difficult to understand alongside his messianic status.¹⁴¹ Without excluding either of these interpretations, it seems more straightforward to see this as another instance of insider revelation akin to Luke 8:10–18. For the time, news of Jesus' identity and his impending suffering is to be kept secret, like a lamp covered over, later to be revealed openly (8:16–17). For Luke's audience, Luke 9:22 is the clearest statement so far concerning Jesus' death and resurrection, although the rejection spoken of in Simeon's prophecy (2:34–35) and the escalation of conflict with the religious leaders (5:30; 6:7; 6:11; 7:30; cf. 5:35) is congruent with this revelation.¹⁴²

In Luke 9:23, Jesus turns his attention beyond the twelve disciples to a larger group that was either still nearby (cf. 9:12–17) or had gathered (cf. Mark 8:34), offering instructions 'to all' (πρὸς πάντας) concerning the cost and dedication of following him (Luke 9:23–27). The suffering and dedication that Jesus says is

¹³⁹ Charles H. Cosgrove has shown how Luke-Acts uses δεῖ often for the "divine must" from which four emphases emerge: (1) the "must" is rooted in God's "ancient plan"; (2) it demands obedience; (2) it is God's "guarantee of his plan"; and (4) it envisions salvation-history as a "stage set" for "divine intervention" (Charles H. Cosgrove, "The Divine Dei in Luke-Acts: Investigations into the Lukan Understanding of God's Providence," *NovT* 26.2 [1984]: 189–90); cf. Squires, *Plan of God*.

¹⁴⁰ Bovon, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, 1:363; Carroll, *Luke*, 211; Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, 164–80.

¹⁴¹ Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 53; Along these lines, Marshall says, "[the confession] is to be kept quiet...because its content, which is now to be delineated, is beyond the understanding of the people" (*Gospel of Luke*, 369).

¹⁴² Cf. Darr, *On Character Building*, 85–126; Kingsbury, *Conflict*, 21–28, 78–103.

required to follow him—e.g., ‘take up his cross daily’ (9:23), ‘loses his life’ (9:24)—would be seen in a different light by the disciples (and Luke’s audience) who have just witnessed Jesus speak of the divine necessity of his death (9:22) from those in the crowd not privy to such knowledge. The possibility of being ‘ashamed’ of the Son of Man, juxtaposed with his return ‘in his glory’ in verse 26 also makes the best sense in the light of Jesus’ passion prediction. Thus the revelatory privilege that the disciples enjoy continues to be manifest (cf. 8:10). When Jesus finishes his instruction by promising that ‘some’ of those standing with him would not die ‘until they see the kingdom of God’ (ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ), then, it is possible that he is referring to the experience of (some of) the twelve disciples (and perhaps some others present) of the kingdom (cf. 17:20). ‘Seeing’ the kingdom most likely looks ahead either to the Transfiguration (9:28–36) or to the manifestation of the kingdom through the ascension of Jesus and Spirit-empowered ministry of the apostles (e.g., Acts 1:6; 2:1–4).¹⁴³

The Transfiguration, Jesus’ momentary glorified transformation witnessed by Peter, John, and James, takes place about eight days after the feeding of the 5,000 (Luke 9:28). Jesus’ glorified appearance, the appearance of Elijah and Moses (9:30–31), and Peter’s mistaken suggestion (9:33) reinforce Jesus’ uniqueness as the Messiah of God (cf. 9:8, 19). On this mountain, the audience learns something the disciples do not (on account of their sleepiness) (9:32), unique to Luke’s account: Jesus, Moses, and Elijah discuss Jesus’ departure (ἔξοδον) which ‘he was about to

¹⁴³ For Luke’s concept of the kingdom and its relation to Jesus and perception, see the analysis of the Parable of the Sower (above). For further discussion, see Bovon, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 1:368; Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 377–78.

fulfil in Jerusalem' (ἥν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ) (9:31).¹⁴⁴ This statement ties Jesus' imminent future with the fulfilment of the Law and Prophets (cf. 24:44–47).¹⁴⁵ It also anticipates Jesus' determination to go to Jerusalem (9:51), which again is something only the audience learns in such terms. In light of the prediction of Jesus' death, resurrection, and coming in glory (9:22, 26), the narrative offers a strong implication that Jerusalem will play an important role in these key events.¹⁴⁶ Without this knowledge, the disciples are left only with the command to listen to and follow Jesus, God's Chosen Son (8:18; 9:23, 35), the one whom they correctly recognise as the Messiah (9:20, 35), in spite of their limited understanding of his passion (9:33; cf. 9:45). As a result, the audience is drawn to "...look for how and when the disciples will finally realize the significance of Jesus' fateful words."¹⁴⁷

2.6.4 Synthesis

In Luke 9, questions concerning the identity of Jesus come to the fore. Herod is seen as an example of one who does not perceive, who is perplexed about Jesus' identity and 'seeks to see him' (9:9). In the Gospel of Luke, Herod proves to be a character who 'sees but does not see' (8:10). The disciples confirm their place as insiders, those who perceive Jesus' messiahship (9:20), albeit imperfectly as Peter's actions and the disciples' response at the Transfiguration demonstrate (9:33, 34). Jesus' revelation of the extent of his future suffering is another example of special revelation to an inner circle (9:22), as is the Transfiguration, witnessed by Peter,

¹⁴⁴ The growing difference between what the audience knows and what the disciples know creates irony and suspense, as noted by Frein ("Misunderstanding," 338); cf. Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 170.

¹⁴⁵ Carroll, *Luke*, 217–20; Bovon, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 1:276.

¹⁴⁶ Along these lines, Conzelmann notes: "If we take the context [of the Transfiguration] seriously—which is necessary in Luke—then the story provides the heavenly confirmation of Jesus' prediction of the Passion" (*Theology*, 57–58).

¹⁴⁷ Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 170.

John, and James (9:28). The end of the Transfiguration account reiterates the importance for the disciples to ‘watch how [they] listen’ (8:18) as a cloud overshadows them and they hear the voice of God command them to listen to Jesus (9:34–35). Also, the secrecy motif is present (9:21, 36), reinforcing the insider-outsider contrast that was especially prominent in the Parable of the Sower.

2.7 The Concealed Meaning of Jesus’ Statement (Luke 9:43b–45)

As has been seen, the lead up to the travel narrative (Luke 9:1–50) focuses largely on Jesus and his teaching about the kingdom, the contrast between his miracle-working power and future humiliation, and the disciples’ recognition of Jesus’ identity in spite of their incomplete understanding of his future suffering. But upon hearing the passion prediction in Luke 9:44, the disciples not only do not understand it, but the meaning is *concealed* from them (9:45). Thus the rhetoric of perception takes an interesting, perhaps unexpected turn in light of earlier indications that the disciples have insider knowledge.

2.7.1 Passage and Translation (Luke 9:43b–45)

Πάντων δὲ θαυμάζόντων ἐπὶ πᾶσιν οἷς ἐποίει εἶπεν πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ· θέσθε ὑμεῖς εἰς τὰ ὦτα ὑμῶν τοὺς λόγους τούτους· ὁ γὰρ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου μέλλει παραδίδοσθαι εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων. οἱ δὲ ἡγνόουν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο καὶ ἦν παρακεκαλυμμένον ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἵνα μὴ αἰσθωνται αὐτό, καὶ ἐφοβοῦντο ἐρωτῆσαι αὐτὸν περὶ τοῦ ῥήματος τούτου.

But while all of them were marveling about all of the things that he was doing, he said to his disciples: “You place these words into your ears: For the Son of Man is about to be handed over into the hands of men.” But they did not understand this statement, and it was hidden from them so that they would not perceive it, and they were afraid to ask him about this statement.

2.7.2 Literary Context

Luke 9:43b–45 narrates the second explicit passion prediction in the Third Gospel (cf. 9:22). Whereas in the first passion prediction Jesus explicitly predicts his death and resurrection—specifying he would be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes (9:22)—in the second he says only that he will be ‘handed over into the hands of men’ (9:44). Luke follows his source, Mark, closely in the section containing these two passion predictions, though notable departures suggest a Lukan emphasis on the circumstances surrounding the disciples’ misunderstanding. In particular, Luke essentially follows Mark in sequence, omitting certain Markan pericopae and so compressing the narrative relative to his source.¹⁴⁸ As a result, relative to Mark, Luke shortens the interval between the passion predictions in Luke 9:22 and 9:44, while significantly lengthening the gap between the passion prediction in Luke 9:44 and 18:31–33 (cf. Mark 9:31; 10:32–34). Even though Luke explains the cause of misunderstanding after the second (9:45) and fourth (18:34) passion predictions where Mark does not, he makes no use of Mark’s pericope of the misunderstanding of the disciples after the feeding of the 4,000 (Mark 8:14–21)—sandwiched between the healing of a deaf-mute man (Mark 7:31–37) and blind man (Mark 8:22–26)—nor Peter’s ignorance reflected in his rebuke of Jesus (Mark 8:32–33). Luke ties the passion prediction in Luke 9:44 closely with the healing scene that

¹⁴⁸ As briefly mentioned earlier, Luke moves from the pericope of the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:32–44/Luke 9:10b–17) to Peter’s confession (Mark 8:27–30/Luke 9:18–21). In so doing, he effectively bridges Mark’s feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:32–44) with the parallel feeding of the 4,000 (Mark 8:1–10), omitting the latter altogether and passing over the intervening Markan material. He also omits the rebuke of Peter (cf. Mark 8:32–33) and the question regarding Elijah (cf. Mark 9:11–13), and he abbreviates the pericope of the demon-possessed boy (Mark 9:14–29/Luke 9:37–43a) leading up to the second passion prediction (Mark 9:30–32/Luke 9:43b–45). Luke subsequently follows Mark two short pericopae further (Mark 9:33–41/Luke 9:46–50) until Luke 9:51 where Jesus is said to “set his face to go to Jerusalem” (*αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ*). Thereafter, much of the Lukan travel narrative (roughly from this point until 19:44) alternates between Q and L material, occasionally reflecting triple-tradition material.

precedes it (Luke 9:43b: ‘while they all were marveling...’; cf. 9:22), whereas Mark’s second passion prediction follows a change of scene (Mark 9:30).¹⁴⁹ The Lukan narrative is thus able to offer a contrast between the wonder of the crowds regarding Jesus’ miraculous deeds (Luke 9:43) and his future deliverance into the ‘hands of men’ (Luke 9:44): Though Jesus is now the object of amazement among the people, he will soon be handed over (μέλλει παραδίδοσθαι) into their hands, fitting his description of them as an ‘unbelieving and crooked generation’ (γενεά ἄπιστος καὶ διεστραμμένη) (9:41; cf. 11:29–32, 49–51; 17:25; Acts 2:40).¹⁵⁰

The passion prediction is further set apart in the way Luke, again departing from Mark, depicts Jesus introducing it: “You place these words into your ears” (θέσθε ὑμεῖς εἰς τὰ ὦτα ὑμῶν τοὺς λόγους τούτους). The command not only creates expectation for Luke’s audience (and the disciples) that what Jesus is about to say is extremely significant; it reiterates the imperatives that the disciples have recently heard: ‘Watch how you *listen*’ (9:18); ‘This is my Son...*listen* to him’ (9:35).¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Luke also ignores Mark 9:30b which narrates Jesus’ desire that no one know they were passing through Galilee (καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν ἵνα τις γνοῖ). Less significantly, Luke also departs from Mark 9:31a by omitting the mention of Jesus teaching (cf. ἐδίδασκεν γὰρ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ) and using the aorist form of λέγω rather than imperfect—a grammatical shift which better suits the participial construction of verse 43.

¹⁵⁰ Bovon comments: “...the generation that is addressed is not only ἄπιστος (‘faithless’), but also διεστραμμένη (‘perverse,’ ‘corrupt’). It presently embodies the complete guilt of Israel. Like the figure of wisdom, the messenger of God confronts all alone the refractory nation, and asks how long he can continue to endure this situation” (Luke 1:1–9:50, 1:387); Jesus’ rebuke is variously interpreted as against the disciples for their inability to exorcise the demon, the father who lacked faith (Green), or some combination (Bovon, Marshall). See Green, *Luke*, 388–89; Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 391–92. While the disbelief here may in fact anticipate the misunderstanding of the disciples in 9:45 (cf. Bovon 387), Luke’s addition of “crooked” (cf. esp. Acts 13:8, 10) and the usage elsewhere of “this generation” language in rebukes suggests a group that is not inclusive of the disciples (see references above).

¹⁵¹ It is possible that τοὺς λόγους τούτους refers to the words of the crowd (9:43) or perhaps even to Jesus’ own words of rebuke issued in 9:41. The narrative distance between verses 41 and 44, though slight, weigh against the latter possibility, especially in light of the competing referent in 9:44b. As for the former possibility, the marveling of the crowds narrated twice in 9:43 suggests that the crowds were speaking, though it is notable that no words are recorded. While τοὺς λόγους τούτους can refer to ‘these things’ (i.e., generically to events like the healing and not just to literal words or speech), the metaphor of placing words in one’s ears (9:44a) suggests that λόγους refers to actual words.

2.7.3 Exegetical Analysis

A thorough analysis of Luke 9:43b–45 confirms the strong contrast between the amazement of the crowd over Jesus’ deed and his coming humiliation and between the solemnity of the passion prediction and the disciples’ failure to understand it. The passage is usually treated as its own paragraph even though it is a continuation of the healing scene that precedes it.¹⁵² Note that Jesus is portrayed as still in the midst of the crowd that had gathered, turning to briefly address his disciples while the crowd is stirring about the healing they have witnessed. The genitive absolute participial construction that begins Luke 9:43b indicates simultaneous time in relation to the main verb that follows (εἶπεν): Jesus spoke to his disciples “*while* all of them [the crowd] were marveling” (Πάντων δὲ θαυμαζόντων). Even though the temporal reference of the participle in its context is past time, its present tense-form indicates imperfective aspect, in which “...*the action is conceived of by the language user as being in progress*. In other words, its internal structure is seen as unfolding.”¹⁵³ Thus, in 9:43a and 9:43b, using two different verbs for amazement, Luke portrays the action as ‘in progress,’ as ‘unfolding’. In so doing, Jesus’ passion prediction to his disciples is depicted very much *in the midst* of the larger healing scene, resulting in a starker contrast with the miracle, consequent amazement of the crowd, and the misunderstanding of the disciples (9:45; cf. 9:32–33, 40–41, 46–48, 54–56). The extent of the amazement—that it was felt by ‘all of them’ (πάντες in 9:43a; Πάντων

¹⁵² E.g., the NA28 treats 9:43b–45 as a new paragraph, as do most commentators.

¹⁵³ Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: JSOT, 1994), 21 (italics original); cf. Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament with Reference to Tense and Mood* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 91. Compare the same imperfective aspect in the preceding sentence (Luke 9:43a) in which Luke uses an imperfect to indicate the crowd’s amazement “at the greatness of God” immediately following the healing (ἐξεπλήσσοντο δὲ πάντες ἐπὶ τῇ μεγαλειότητι τοῦ θεοῦ).

in 9:43b) and concerned ‘the greatness of God’ (μεγαλειότητι τοῦ θεοῦ [9:43a]) and ‘all the things [Jesus] was doing’ (πᾶσιν οἷς ἐποίει in 9:43b)—provides further contrast to the handing over of the Son of Man into ‘the hands of men’ (εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων).

The command, “You place these words into your ears,” (9:44a) anticipates the significance of what Jesus is about to say, as well as the importance of understanding it. The imperative θέσθε is supplemented with the personal pronoun, ὑμεῖς, which sets the referent, the disciples, in contrast with others in the scene, especially the marveling crowd.¹⁵⁴ Jesus thus draws the disciples’ attention to what is being said, to call for deliberate listening and careful reflection with the goal of understanding.

The words that the disciples are to ‘place into [their] ears’ follow in 9:44b: “For the Son of Man is about to be handed over into the hands of men.” The passion prediction is connected with the preceding command by the conjunction γάρ, used in

¹⁵⁴ One wants to be careful in asserting that in every case a nominative pronoun is the expressed subject of a verb it is emphatic. Many grammarians maintain personal pronouns are often used to contrast the subject with another preceding subject or to specify the subject in some way, especially when used with an imperative. See Porter, *Idioms*, 221; Wallace, *Grammar*, 320–23; H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 123; Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 72; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in The Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1934), 676. Note that Luke does not often express the subject of an imperative with a personal pronoun. The phrase θέσθε...εἰς τὰ ὦτα ὑμῶν (“Place X into your ears”) and similar phrases are not widely attested in ancient Greek, though Luke makes use of them on a few occasions (cf. Luke 1:44, 66; 21:14; Acts 5:4; 11:22; 19:21—none of which appear in parallel passages of Mark or Matthew). This observation is based on TLG searches for occurrences of τίθημι in proximity with either οὗς in the dative (sg. or pl.) or with οὗς (in any form) governed by the prepositions εἰς, ἐν, or ἐπί. None of the results closely resembled the construction of Luke. A similar search was carried out replacing τίθημι with δίδωμι (cf. Exod 17:14 LXX), and the results were similar. Close resemblances of the phrase occur in the LXX, especially Exod 17:14: “...δὸς εἰς τὰ ὦτα Ἰησοῦ...” (cf. 2 Kgs 19:28; Jer 9:20; Mal 2:2). Thus Marshall suggests the phrase either reflects a Hebraism in Luke’s source or Luke has composed a “Septuagintal-sounding phrase”; Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 393; cf. TDNT s.v. “οὗς” 5:553–54.

its explanatory sense, unpacking the τοὺς λόγους τούτους of the preceding clause.¹⁵⁵

The “handing over” of the Son of Man in Luke 9:44 is portrayed as imminent.¹⁵⁶ It is possible that this private instruction to the disciples (again, in the midst of crowd; cf. 8:10) is an elaboration of Jesus’ hint in 9:41 that his time on earth was nearing its end (‘how long will I be with you?’).¹⁵⁷ In any case, the question in 9:41 hits the same note as the allusion to Jesus’ ‘exodus’ in Jerusalem (9:31), the passion predictions (9:22, 44), and the setting of the travel narrative just ahead: “Now when the days drew near for his ascension, he set his face to go to Jerusalem” (9:51).

In Luke 9:45, the response of the disciples is narrated with a compound sentence made up of three independent clauses connected together with two conjunctions (καί): “But they did not understand this statement, and it was hidden from them so that they would not perceive it, and they were afraid to ask him about this statement.” The middle clause, which reflects a Lukan addition to Mark, serves to explain the clause that precedes. This fits both with the occasional use of καί with explanatory clauses in Greek and with the use of pluperfect periphrastic constructions in narratives to supply background information of supplemental or explanatory value.¹⁵⁸ Concerning this use of the pluperfect, Campbell says,

The pluperfect functions to provide offline supplemental, descriptive, and explicatory material within narrative proper. ...Offline material is most naturally expressed with imperfective aspect, and heightened remoteness explains why the pluperfect often provides material that supplements already offline material, such as that carried by the imperfect tense-form.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Schürmann, *Lukasevangelium 1,1-9,50*, 1:573 n 143; cf. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 393; BDAG s.v. “γάρ.”

¹⁵⁶ Luke renders Mark’s παραδίδοται (Mark 9:31) as μέλλει παραδίδοσθαι (cf. Matt 17:22).

¹⁵⁷ Carroll, *Luke*, 222.

¹⁵⁸ Steve E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010), 26; Robertson, *Grammar*, 1181.

¹⁵⁹ Constantine R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*, SBG 13 (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 237.

While not all grammarians agree on the aspectual features of the Greek perfect and pluperfect, most see the discourse function of a pluperfect (or, in this case, a pluperfect periphrastic) as providing background (or offline) material.¹⁶⁰ In line with Campbell's suggestion, the use of the pluperfect periphrastic in Luke 9:45 supplements material that is already backgrounded, namely the misunderstanding of the disciples depicted by the imperfect ἡγνούν. In the context, the pluperfect construction (ἦν παρακεκαλυμμένον) indicates a state of being that began in the past.¹⁶¹ Thus at some point prior to the disciples' misunderstanding (ἡγνούν), Jesus' statement (i.e., its meaning) had been hidden from them (ἦν παρακεκαλυμμένον).

The word depicting the concealment (παρακαλύπτω) occurs only here in Luke-Acts (and the New Testament), twice in the LXX (Isa 44:8; Ezek 22:26), and is relatively uncommon in extant ancient Greek texts.¹⁶² Its figurative use to depict the concealment of the statement's meaning is essentially the same as Luke's use of κρύπτω in 18:34 and 19:42, and similar to ἀποκρύπτω in 10:21 and συγκαλύπτω in 12:2. The phrase τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο is likely the referent of the unexpressed subject (i.e., 'this statement was hidden'; cf. 18:34), which is to say that *the meaning* of the statement was hidden.

Crucial for this study is determining whether the narrative implies who or what is responsible for the concealment. The periphrastic construction uses a perfect passive participle (παρακεκαλυμμένον) without an expressed agent, suggesting one of

¹⁶⁰ Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 45; Buist M. Fanning, *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 321; Porter, *Idioms*, 39–42. In discourse analysis, the narrative mainline refers to the core of the story, usually narrated with aorist verbs. Information which supplements this mainline, often called "offline" material, is usually narrated with other tenses, especially the imperfect, perfect, and pluperfect in the indicative mood.

¹⁶¹ This is not to say that time is grammaticalised by the pluperfect periphrastic construction.

¹⁶² A TLG search yields 89 results, a few of which are discussions of the related biblical texts mentioned above.

the following interpretations: (1) God is the implied agent (i.e., the construction is a ‘divine passive’; cf. 8:10);¹⁶³ (2) Satan or an evil power is the implied agent (cf. 8:12);¹⁶⁴ or (3) The ambiguity is such that no agent is implied.¹⁶⁵ The second and third interpretations are usually made primarily to reduce tension with the implied culpability of the disciples. In other words, if God is the implied agent, how could the disciples be held responsible for their misunderstanding?¹⁶⁶ Nolland’s suggestion that concealment is Satanic is possible but the narrative offers little explicit support for this view.¹⁶⁷ Green defends a version of the third view which calls for further engagement.

Green’s solution, leaning on insights from the discipline of cognitive science, is to resolve tension between divine revelation (Luke 8:10) and the disciples’ culpable misunderstanding (9:45) by arguing that “[t]he disciples are in the dark, so to speak, because they lack the necessary cognitive categories, the required patterns of thought.”¹⁶⁸ Similarly he says, “Simply put, the disciples lack the conceptual equipment necessary to link what Jesus holds together in his passion predictions, namely, his exalted status and impending dishonor.”¹⁶⁹ Thus on Green’s account, the revelation that the disciples enjoy (e.g., 8:10; 10:22) is ineffectual unless the correct

¹⁶³ So most commentators, e.g., Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 394; Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 23–24; Bovon, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 1:393 This interpretation also makes good sense of the ἵνα clause, especially if it indicates purpose.

¹⁶⁴ John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, vol. 2, 3 vols., WBC 35B (Dallas: Word, 1993), 514; cf. Bock, *Luke 1:1–9:50*, 1:889 n. 4.

¹⁶⁵ David L. Tiede, *Luke*, ACNT (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 193.

¹⁶⁶ E.g., Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 2:514.

¹⁶⁷ Recall from the discussion of Luke 8:12 above that the narrative of Luke-Acts is not explicit about Satan’s role in perception.

¹⁶⁸ *Conversion*, 93–94; Green has made this argument in at least three places, but it is most developed in *ibid.*, 91–99; cf. Green, “Learning”; Green, *Luke*, 390–91; similarly, Craig T. McMahan, “More than Meets the ‘I’: Recognition Scenes in The Odyssey and Luke 24,” *PRSt* 35.1 (2008): 101.

¹⁶⁹ Green, *Conversion*, 93.

conceptual categories are in place.¹⁷⁰ There are aspects, then, of the ‘mysteries’ that they do not understand, particularly the suffering of the Messiah, in spite of God having revealed it to them. So for the disciples, who do not (yet) have the right cognitive categories, Green posits a three-step resolution: (1) Jesus’ (or a correct) interpretation of the Scriptures (Luke 24:32, 44, 46; cf. Acts 8:27:31); (2) communal activities (e.g., meals, testimony, christological exposition of Scripture, mission, and worship) (24:33–35, 47–53), the effectiveness of which *still* depend on “...God’s gracious gift whereby they are enabled ‘to see’, ‘to recognize’, and ‘to understand’ (24:16, 31, 45)”¹⁷¹; and (3) illumination of the Holy Spirit to correctly interpret the Scriptures (Acts 2).¹⁷¹

In spite of its impression, Green’s argument does not really resolve the tensions it perceives in the narrative. An illustration makes the point. Imagine the following scenario, mirroring Green’s argument: God wants to reveal to the disciples a far away galaxy hidden by clouds. So God removes the clouds but does not give the disciples the necessary equipment, a telescope, with which to fully comprehend the distant object. The disciples are culpable for their failure to see the galaxy, on Green’s account, and God’s expectation that they *ought* to see it is justified—he removed the clouds, after all. On Green’s view, God’s granting to ‘know the mysteries of the kingdom’ (Luke 8:10) is like God removing the clouds to unveil the galaxy—the mystery is uncovered. The ‘conceptual equipment’, as Green calls it, is

¹⁷⁰ Green cites Schweizer for support: “It is in fact the very revelation of God’s ‘secrets’ (8:10) that leaves them perplexed before the incomprehensible way of God” (Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke*, 163).

¹⁷¹ Green, *Conversion*, 95–96. The first and second points are largely supported by this thesis. The last point, that Acts 2 suggests the Holy Spirit’s role in inspiring correct understandings of Scripture, seems to owe more to other New Testament writings than to Luke-Acts; Green cites John R. Levison (*The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* [Leiden: Brill, 2002]), who demonstrates that this view is “well known” in Second Temple Judaism. However, Green offers no detailed support for this emphasis in Luke-Acts. Luke 12:12, 21:15, and Acts 5:32 provide the strongest suggestions of such a role for the Spirit, but even these passages do not clearly portray the kind of illumination Green envisions.

like the telescope. In his scheme, the disciples only attain the necessary equipment with the three-step resolution recounted above, and this resolution, according to Green, is ultimately dependent upon God. In that case, the disciples' culpability is still a 'problem'. One could ask, for example: How can the disciples be responsible for their misunderstanding if God does not give them the prerequisite equipment that only he can give? This is not so different than the tension Green attempts to resolve—a tension that raises a similar question: How can the disciples be responsible for their misunderstanding if God hides the meaning from them? The task here is not to resolve either theological conundrum, but to simply point out that Green's importation of categories from cognitive science does not actually resolve the problems that were the impetus of his argument (regarding 9:45 and 18:34 in particular) in the first place. Further, Green's solution seems better suited to a historical explanation of why the disciples may not have understood Jesus' passion than a narrative explanation. Luke's narrative simply does not offer Green the categories he needs to make the argument.¹⁷²

In light of Luke 8:10 and its context, examined above, there is little reason to doubt that God *is* the implied agent in 9:45. As was argued for the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp, tension between divine providence and human culpability is at home in the narrative. Further, in Luke 10:21, divine agency in the action of concealment is made explicit. Jesus, addressing God, says, “You have hidden (ἀπέκρυψας) these things from the wise...”.

¹⁷² In his commentary, Green tends to avoid hints of God's involvement in concealment, although he supports the divine passive in Luke 8:10, for God's revelation (Green, *Luke*, 325–27, 390–91, 420–24, 688–91, 845). Also, one questions whether the juxtaposition of Jesus' messiahship and his suffering is so incomprehensible, as Green's argument from cognitive science suggests.

2.7.4 Synthesis

In Luke 9:43b–45, Jesus turns to his disciples to address them privately in the midst of a crowd amazed at Jesus’ miracle. Jesus commands his disciples to listen carefully (9:44a) and then predicts his impending suffering once again (9:44b; cf. 9:22). But the disciples do not understand what Jesus has said *because* its meaning was concealed from them by God (9:45). Their misunderstanding further results in their being afraid to ask Jesus about it and a foolish argument (9:45c–50; cf. 8:25).

For the audience, this raises a question about why God would keep the disciples from understanding Jesus’ passion in spite of granting them, at least in general terms, knowledge of the ‘mysteries of the kingdom’ (8:10). After all, the disciples have proven that they perceive Jesus’ identity as the ‘Messiah of God’ (9:20) in contrast to many others, including Herod and the religious elite. A small hint is to be found in Luke 8:16–17, where the idea of *temporary concealment* was present (as argued above). The audience should therefore maintain the possibility that the concealment is temporary, to serve some purpose within God’s plan of salvation. Confirmation of this possibility will have to wait. However, the result of God’s concealment creates anticipation for when and how the disciples might finally understand Jesus’ passion alongside his identity as the Messiah. Further, it allows the author to maintain the disciples’ status as insiders.

2.8 Conclusion

The rhetoric of perception in Luke-Acts occurs from the preface of the Third Gospel. The implied author writes in hopes that his implied reader, Theophilus, will ‘recognise the certainty concerning the things instructed’ (Luke 1:4), the ‘events

fulfilled among us' (1:1) that Luke narrates. Implicit in the preface is the hermeneutical importance of the credibility of the author and his sources (1:2–3). The preface also subtly sets up an 'insider' group presented positively to the audience ('fulfilled among *us*', 'handed down to *us*') (1:1–2).

Although the preface as such is not distinctive, the significance of its purpose statement should not be overlooked for it is echoed continually throughout Luke. In the first stories of the narrative, for example, Zechariah and Mary ask parallel questions, respectively: "By what can I know this?" (1:18) and "How can this be?" (1:34). Zechariah's question expresses unbelief (1:20), and he proves to be a negative model of perception initially. Mary, however, is commended for her belief (1:45), exemplifying trust in God's promises in spite of what appear to be insurmountable obstacles. Later in the story, Zechariah exemplifies movement from doubt to faith as, having his speech restored, he prophetically praises God for visiting and giving knowledge to his people (1:68, 77–78). Such movement toward understanding will feature again at the end of the Gospel (Luke 24). In Zechariah and Mary's story, then, the audience is encouraged to believe God's promises regarding his plan of salvation in the face of the seemingly impossible. Further, the scriptural tenor of these stories suggests the audience should consider the scriptural precedent for such faith.

The birth narratives also introduce the audience to Simeon, another positive model of perception. Simeon is described as one 'looking for the consolation of Israel' and exemplifies faith in God's scriptural promises. As the Parable of the Sower will confirm, one's disposition affects one's understanding (8:15). For Simeon, *seeing* Jesus is *seeing* salvation (2:25–35). Further, Simeon's prophecy

anticipates the revelatory nature of God's salvation, centred on Jesus (2:29–32), but nevertheless anticipates division, reinforcing the insider-outsider distinction (2:34–35). He warns Mary that Jesus will be a 'sign to be contested' (2:34) and will 'reveal the opinions of many hearts' (2:35). The narrative thus attunes the audience to begin evaluating characters in regard to how they perceive Jesus, the centre of God's scriptural plan of redemption. Shortly after, in Jesus' Nazareth 'sermon', the importance of reading (or hearing) Scripture aright is emphasised, and the synagogue audience's failure to ultimately do so results in division, as Simeon's prophetic word anticipated (4:16–30). Ironically, in his reading from Isaiah, Jesus presents his ministry as restoring sight to the blind (4:18) but his audience will not see it.

In the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp, important concepts related to perception receive acute development. The main point of the section is to emphasise the importance of careful listening, the 'how' of hearing the kingdom message (esp. 8:15, 18). Obstacles to perception are given: the Devil, trials and persecutions, cares, riches, and pleasures (8:11–14). The good soil, representing someone with a 'good' and 'noble' heart, is the ideal listener, one whose understanding will be multiplied (8:15, 18). The warning to listen (8:18) is underscored by the privileged position of the disciples as those to whom it has been 'granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom' (8:10), contrasted by the obduracy motif from the Isaiah citation. Further, the Parable of the Lamp and Jesus' comment that follows suggest God's role in keeping the mysteries of the kingdom hidden, at least temporarily (8:16–17), a notion that appears to be confirmed in Luke 24, examined below.

In spite of special revelation for some, others will 'see and not see' (Luke 8:10), such as Herod, who wishes to *see* Jesus but misunderstands who Jesus is (9:7–

9). Unlike Herod and many others, the disciples confirm their place as insiders by rightly identifying Jesus as the ‘Messiah of God’ (9:20; cf. 9:7–9, 18–19). However, the divergence between the disciples’ understanding and that of Luke’s audience widens: The audience gains knowledge of certain details of Jesus’ impending suffering and resurrection that the disciples do not at Jesus’ Transfiguration.¹⁷³ Here, Peter, John, and James show incomplete understanding and are left with the command from God to ‘listen’ to ‘my chosen son’ (9:35). Shortly after, when Jesus speaks of his future suffering, commanding the disciples to ‘put these words in your ears’, the disciples not only do not understand. The meaning of Jesus’ statement is *concealed* from them by God. The suspense this creates is leveraged by Luke to communicate some of his central christological convictions.

In the first part of the Gospel of Luke, then, the audience is encouraged to identify with positive models of perception in order to ‘recognise the certainty’ concerning Luke’s narrative of the ‘events fulfilled among us’ (1:1–4). This can be summed up with the imperative to ‘watch how you listen’ (8:18), which implies careful listening to authoritative sources like the author of the Third Gospel, the narrator, Jesus, and Scripture. The audience should also know that God grants knowledge of the ‘mysteries of the kingdom’, and that squandering this privilege could lead to multiplied loss (8:18). The importance of careful listening is further accentuated by the irony and suspense created in narrating the disciples’ misunderstanding, raising the question, “When and how will the disciples understand?” However, the disciples’ position as insiders is maintained by holding in tension both their status as recipients of special revelation (8:10; cf. 10:21–24) and

¹⁷³ Similarly, Frein speaks of the concealment of knowledge from the disciples as creating irony “...by producing a disparity between the readers’ understanding and that of the characters” (“Misunderstanding,” 338).

God's role in temporarily concealing from them certain aspects of Jesus' role in God's plan of salvation (9:45; cf. 8:16–17).

3 From Misunderstanding to Illumination (Luke 10–24)

Luke 9:51 commences what has been called Luke's 'travel narrative', the section from near the point Jesus 'sets his face to Jerusalem' (9:51) to his arrival at the Triumphal Entry (19:28–44).¹ It is plausible that the section draws on a Moses/Exodus typology in which Jesus is presented as a 'prophet like Moses' who leads a stiff-necked people in a kind of exodus (cf. 9:31).² The section is notable for the general absence of material from the Gospel of Mark, as well as containing a large amount of Jesus' teaching. Significant for the purposes of this study is that near its beginning (9:43–45) and its end (18:31–34) are passion predictions that the disciples cannot understand due to divine concealment. The narrative has attuned the reader to the disciples' status as insiders with special knowledge, and therefore the reader has been encouraged to identify with the disciples. But in the face of the disciples' misunderstanding (9:45), a disjunction has been created between the

¹ The boundaries of the travel narrative need not be firm, as the Transfiguration already anticipates Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (9:31); cf. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 400–2; Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 2:525–31.

² David P. Moessner has argued cogently for this, saying, "The consummated Exodus journey of the Prophet like but greater than Moses (Luke 9:51–19:44) forms the dynamic center of Luke's unfolding drama of the journeying history of Israel's salvation... As that great work of the Deuteronomist historians consists of the deliverance wrought for Israel in the Exodus story of Moses (Deuteronomy) and is completed by the unfolding history of that salvation (Joshua—2 Kings), even as Moses foresaw and prophesied, so Luke's first volume presents the consummation of the first Exodus in the New Exodus story of Jesus and is completed in the unfolding history of that salvation, even as Jesus foresaw and prophesied" (*Lord of the Banquet: The Literary and Theological Significance of the Lukan Travel Narrative* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989], 325); for Moessner's categories of Israel's response to prophecy, see Odil Hannes Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten: Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes im Alten Testament, Spätjudentum und Urchristentum* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener-Verlag, 1967); For the possibility of an Isaianic New Exodus typology, see Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*; While these typologies may well be present, one must be wary of the over-interpretation that such paradigms engender; for my discussion of this matter, see Mann, "(New) Exodus."

reader, who understands what awaits Jesus in Jerusalem, and the disciples who do not.

As Jesus nears Jerusalem, he laments the ignorance of the city, saying that ‘the things that make for peace’ have been ‘hidden from your eyes’ (19:42), that ‘you did not recognise the time of your visitation’ (9:44). Entering Jerusalem, conflict escalates to the point of Jesus’ arrest. During his ‘trial’, Jesus is betrayed by Peter (22:54–62), misunderstood by the religious elite (22:66–70), Herod (23:8–12), and many others. A notable exception is one of the criminals, crucified next to Jesus: he affirms Jesus’ messianic identity alongside his suffering (23:40–43). The darkness of crucifixion, however, gives way to the illumination of Luke 24, in which the disciples’ ‘slowness of heart’ to believe is overcome through Jesus’ exposition of Scripture and his act of opening the disciples’ mind (24:25, 45), confirming a central tenet of the narrative, the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s suffering and resurrection.

Near the beginning of the journey to Jerusalem, Jesus will invoke the rhetoric of perception in reflecting on the ministry of the seventy in a passage reminiscent of the Parable of the Sower. It is this passage, Luke 10:21–24, that will be examined next.

3.1 ‘Blessed Are the Eyes that See’ (Luke 10:21–24)

Luke 10:21–24 offers perhaps the most explicit affirmation of God’s role in the concealing of knowledge concerning Jesus’ significance in Luke-Acts. Further, Jesus identifies himself as the Son of God with singular knowledge of the Father and the authority to reveal this knowledge at his will. Finally, the status reversal anticipated

as early as Mary's Magnificat is reiterated, where 'children' enjoy knowledge that is hidden from the 'wise' and 'understanding'.

3.1.1 Passage and Translation (Luke 10:21–24)

Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἡγαλλιάσατο [ἐν] τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ εἶπεν·
ἐξομολογοῦμαι σοι, πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἀπέκρυψας ταῦτα
ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις· ναὶ ὁ πατήρ, ὅτι οὕτως
εὐδοκία ἐγένετο ἔμπροσθέν σου. πάντα μοι παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου, καὶ
οὐδεὶς γινώσκει τίς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ, καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ πατήρ εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱὸς
καὶ ὃ ἐὰν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι. (10:21–22)

In the same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and understanding, and you revealed them to children. Yes, Father, because such was pleasing to you. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who is the son except the father and who is the Father except the son and [anyone] to whom the son wishes to reveal [him]."

Καὶ στραφεὶς πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς κατ' ἰδίαν εἶπεν· μακάριοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ οἱ βλέποντες ἃ βλέπετε. λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ προφῆται καὶ βασιλεῖς ἠθέλησαν ἰδεῖν ἃ ὑμεῖς βλέπετε καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν, καὶ ἀκοῦσαι ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσαν. (10:23–24)

And turning to the disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I say to you that many prophets and kings wished to see what you see and did not see and to hear what you hear and did not hear."

3.1.2 Literary Context

For the audience, anticipation of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, his 'exodus' and 'ascension' in Jerusalem, governs the travel narrative (9:23, 31, 44, 51; 18:31–34). His disciples are largely unaware of this future in spite of Jesus' instruction (9:45; cf. 9:32), and they proceed in much the same manner as before, following Jesus, participating in his ministry, and enjoying special revelation (e.g., 10:1–24; cf. 8:10; 9:1–6) while demonstrating incomplete understanding (e.g., 9:46–55).

The conflict anticipated as early as Simeon's prophecy (2:34–35) continues. In preparation of his Jerusalem journey, Jesus sends messengers to arrange for him to stay in Samaria, but the Samaritans reject him (οὐκ ἐδέξαντο αὐτόν) (9:53). Moving on from that village (9:56), Jesus appears to be accepting and/or inviting followers in order to send them out to announce the coming kingdom of God (9:57–56; 10:1–16).³ In Jesus' dialogue with three potential disciples, he demands absolute loyalty to the task (9:58, 60, 62). Seventy disciples besides the twelve are appointed by Jesus to be sent out ahead of him (10:1), a subtle indication of the growth of Jesus' ministry as he moves out of Galilee and towards his destiny in Jerusalem.⁴ The seventy, like Jesus and the Twelve, should be prepared for a (continued) divided response, as Jesus warns (10:3, 6, 10, 16; cf. 2:34–35).

The seventy return with joy, impressed with the authority with which they ministered (10:17). Jesus' response is to call their attention not to their authority but to the fact that their 'names are written in heaven' (ὀνόματα...ἐγγέγραπται ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς) (10:20). It is at this moment (Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ) (10:21) that Jesus offers words about perception.

3.1.3 Exegetical Analysis

At the time of the seventy's report (Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ), Jesus rejoices 'in the Holy Spirit' and addresses God: "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid (ἀπέκρυψας) these things from the wise and understanding, and you revealed

³ Nolland is right to see consonance between the end of Luke 9 and Luke 10, questioning the common division commentators make between the two (*Luke 9:21–18:34*, 2:533).

⁴ Note that the manuscript tradition is split quite evenly about whether "seventy" or "seventy-two" are sent out. Given the focus of this thesis, it is unnecessary to resolve this problem. For discussion, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 126–27.

(ἀπεκάλυψας) them to children” (10:21). What are the ‘things’ that God hides from the wise and reveals to ‘children’?

In the context, what God hides includes knowledge of God and the Son (10:21b) and the things that the disciples ‘see’ and ‘hear’ (10:23–24), which in light of the recent activity and report (10:17), must include the messianic ministry in which the disciples have participated (10:1–16; cf. 4:18–19; 9:1–6).⁵ Perhaps, then, matters are ‘hidden’ to the extent that some do not witness these events. Thus Nolland argues that “...the language of seeing is thus mainly straightforwardly literal, with just a trace of the more complex sense of ‘see with insight and response’, which was found in 8:10.”⁶ Weighing strongly against this, however, is the concept of *knowing* (γινώσκω) the Father and the Son in verse 22, as well as the categories of those from whom these things are hidden, the ‘wise and understanding’ (σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν) (10:21). First, the statement about the mutual knowledge of the Son and Father, a knowledge mediated to others by Jesus, connects the ‘seeing and hearing’ of the recent messianic ministry with *knowing* God and Jesus (10:21–22). Marshall, leaning on Hoffmann, thus says, “...there is an apocalyptic background to the saying, so that it speaks of knowledge of the Father’s secret plan of salvation and of the Son’s supreme place as the coming Son of man.”⁷ This has been the main object of perception in the narrative, as has been argued. Second, the irony of the status reversal in 10:21 relies not on literal sight but *perception*. In other words, it is not only that the ‘wise and understanding’ have been unable to literally see Jesus’

⁵ Cf. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 434.

⁶ Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 2:576.

⁷ Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 437; cf. Paul Hoffmann, *Studien zur Theologie der Logienquelle*. (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1972), 127–31.

miracles: they have not been able to *understand* them (cf. 11:52).⁸ As argued above, the rhetoric of perception thus far in the narrative has encouraged the connection of literal hearing and sight—witnessing Jesus’ messianic deeds—with *understanding* their significance (2:30–35; 4:18–19; 7:22–23; 8:10, 16–18, 9:7–9).

The things hidden and revealed, then, entail a knowledge of the Father and Son, as well as insight into Jesus’ ministry, which, in Luke-Acts, is the fulfilment of Israel’s Scriptures—the things ‘many prophets and kings wished to see’ (10:24).⁹

Marshall summarises:

What the disciples see are the signs of the era of salvation, the mighty works done by Jesus, the indications that the era of fulfilment has come (which men of the past were unable to see). Hence implicit in the saying is the need for true perception of the significance of what is happening...¹⁰

Further, the blessing—“Blessed are the eyes that see what you see...” (10:23)—is a general one, “...to all who will ‘see and hear’ the wonderful ‘things fulfilled among us’,” inviting the audience to see and understand as well.¹¹

3.1.4 Synthesis

In Luke 10:21–24, God is depicted as hiding from the ‘wise’ and ‘understanding’ the true significance of miracles and preaching that attest to Jesus’ identity, as well as his relationship to God and God’s plan of salvation. Further, Jesus presents himself as the Son of God and ‘sole mediator of knowledge of God to men’.¹² The disciples are contrasted with those kings and prophets who ‘wish to see but do not see’ (10:23–

⁸ This was anticipated in Mary’s Magnificat (2:48, 51, 52, 53), and illustrated by the prominent positions given to lowly characters, such as Mary, the shepherds (2:8–20), and various others (outlined above). Cf. Carroll, *Luke*, 241.

⁹ It is unlikely that 10:21–24 emphasises present revelation to the exclusion of “what happened in those days of divine disclosure” in Israel’s Scriptures, as Darr indicates (Darr, “Watch How You Listen,” 95).

¹⁰ Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 438; cf. Carroll, *Luke*, 242.

¹¹ Darr, “Watch How You Listen,” 96.

¹² Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 438.

24), underscoring the significance of what they in fact do see. For the audience, the passage reaffirms the insider-outsider distinctions earlier discussed and makes explicit God's role not only in revelation (cf. 8:10) but also in concealment (cf. 9:45). The audience is now in a better position to understand the disciples' understanding (e.g., 9:20) alongside their misunderstanding (9:45; cf. 18:34).

3.2 The Revelation of the Son of Man (Luke 17:20–37)

While on his way to Jerusalem (Luke 17:11), Jesus addresses the Pharisees and the disciples, respectively, about the coming of the kingdom (17:20–37). To the Pharisees Jesus emphasises the imminence of the kingdom, that it is in their midst (17:20–21). So far in the Third Gospel, the Pharisees have proven to be those who see but do not perceive. To the disciples, by contrast, Jesus speaks primarily of the future 'revelation' of the Son of Man (17:30). The disciples are instructed not to be persuaded by claims of Jesus' return because when it happens, it will be obvious to them. Further, they are encouraged to remain faithful during this period (17:32–33; cf. 18:8).

3.2.1 Passage and Translation (Luke 17:20–21, 22)

Ἐπερωτηθεὶς δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν Φαρισαίων πότε ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν· οὐκ ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, οὐδὲ ἐροῦσιν· ἰδοὺ ὧδε ἢ ἐκεῖ, ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν. (17:20–21)

Now when asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation, nor will they say, 'Look, here or there'. For behold the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς τοὺς μαθητάς· ἐλεύσονται ἡμέραι ὅτε ἐπιθυμήσετε μίαν τῶν ἡμερῶν τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἰδεῖν καὶ οὐκ ὄψεσθε. (17:22)

But he said to his disciples, “Days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man and you will not see.”

3.2.2 Literary Context

Since Luke 10:21–24, the rhetoric of perception has surfaced in a few passages that call for brief summary. As mentioned in the examination of the Parable of the Sower earlier, Mary and Martha offer positive and negative models of perception, respectively (10:38–42): Mary sat at Jesus’ feet, listening to his word (ἤκουεν τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ) while Martha was distracted doing other things. Sometime later, when someone in the crowd compliments Jesus, he strikes a similar note: “...blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it” (οἱ ἀκούοντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ φυλάσσοντες) (11:28). Jesus then warns against sign-seeking (11:29), but nevertheless offers the ‘sign of Jonah’, implying that judgment awaits those who do not heed his preaching (11:31, 32), recalling earlier imperatives to listen carefully.¹³ This is immediately followed by a compact series of analogies of sight, light, and darkness (11:33–36) in which:

...Jesus warns those who ‘test’ him by seeking signs, indicating that only the one whose eye is single, ἀπλοῦς, will ‘see’ a favourable outcome at the judgment. On that day, *all* Jesus’ hearers will stand in heavenly light—light that will reveal them to be servants either of Satan or of God. ...But when the light of Christ is revealed in all its glory, then those who are ἀπλοῦς... will themselves be made wholly bright.¹⁴

Like the Parable of the Sower, which calls for an examination of the character of one’s heart as it relates to perception, here Jesus calls for single-mindedness, careful attention to him and his message.¹⁵ Similarly, the passage that follows addresses the

¹³ Note the comparison with ‘hearing the wisdom of Solomon’ (ἀκοῦσαι τὴν σοφίαν) (11:31) and repentance ‘at the preaching of Jonah’ (εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ) (11:32).

¹⁴ Garrett, “Lest the Light,” 105.

¹⁵ Darr, “Watch How You Listen,” 104.

‘true’ character—what is on the ‘inside’ (11:39, 44; cf. 11:34, 35)—of the Pharisees and lawyers (11:37–52). Jesus’ strong rebuke of these religious elites culminates in a final statement, addressed to the lawyers (νομικοῖς): “...you have taken away the key of *knowledge*; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those entering” (11:52). Thus the narrative presents the Pharisees and lawyers as negative models of perception with the strongest terms. Their response is increased hostility (11:53–54), which the narrative follows with Jesus’ warning that the hypocrisy of the Pharisees will eventually become obvious (12:1–3), recalling Simeon’s warning that Jesus would be a ‘sign to be contested’ through whom ‘the thoughts of many hearts would be revealed’ (2:34–35).

In Darr’s analysis of the Pharisees with respect to perception, he rightly notes that they have “...*become caricatures of a morality to be avoided*, for it blinds and deafens one to God. If one is to read with insight, he or she must avoid the mindset (or heartset) displayed by Luke’s Pharisees.”¹⁶ In Luke 16:14, although the Pharisees are *listening* to Jesus, who was teaching on the subject of wealth, they mocked him (ἐξεμυκτήριζον αὐτόν). The narrative suggests the reason: the Pharisees are ‘lovers of money’ (φιλάργυροι) (16:14). Jesus rebukes them, asserting that ‘God knows your *hearts*’ (16:15; cf. 2:35; 5:22). Jesus then offers them a parable of a rich man who abuses a poor man, Lazarus. In the afterlife, the tormented rich man pleads with Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn the rich man’s family so that they might avoid his demise (16:19–28). The dialogue that follows drips with irony in the Lukan narrative:

But Abraham said, “They have Moses and the Prophets; let them *hear* them” (ἀκουσάτωσαν αὐτῶν) (16:29).

¹⁶ Darr, *On Character Building*, 92 (emphasis original); cf. *ibid.*, 92–126.

But he [the rich man] said, “No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent” (16:30).

But he [Abraham] said, “If they do not *listen* (οὐκ ἀκούουσιν) to Moses and the Prophets, then neither will be they be persuaded if someone rises from dead” (16:31).

The obstacle, then, to perception is not an absence of signs or the miraculous (as shown also in the examination of Luke 10:21–24 above). It is the manner of *listening*: ‘Watch therefore how you listen’ (8:18). This is reinforced once again in the passage below.

3.2.3 Exegetical Analysis

In Luke 17:20, the Pharisees ask Jesus when the kingdom of God would come (cf. Acts 1:6). There is little indication that their intent is to ‘trap’ Jesus in this instance (cf. 11:53–54; 14:1), and Jesus’ answer comes without any kind of strong rebuke. The first part of Jesus’ response is to say, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation” (μετὰ παρατηρήσεως) (17:20). Much ink has been spilled on the meaning of μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, resulting in a number of unnecessarily complicated proposals.¹⁷ The noun παρατήρησις has to do with close observation or scrutiny, and BDAG’s explanatory note seems to fit the Lukan context well: “God’s Reign is not coming with observation, i.e. in such a way that its rise can be observed.”¹⁸ Recall from the earlier summary of the kingdom of God in Luke-Acts that its initial hiddenness is emphasised (Luke 8:10–17; cf. 13:18–21), and its nearness is related to

¹⁷ See discussion in Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 2:852; François Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. Donald S. Deer, vol. 2, 3 vols., Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 514–15.

¹⁸ BDAG s.v. “παρατήρησις.”

Jesus' appearance on earth (9:27; 10:9, 11; 11:20).¹⁹ One of the major plot devices in the narrative has been the conflict surrounding correct perception of Jesus and his kingdom message. Further, the Pharisees are those who, as Darr notes, have been scrutinising Jesus yet unable to correctly perceive him (Luke 6:7; 14:1).²⁰

The second half of Jesus' response is to say, "...nor will they say, 'Look, here or there'. For behold the kingdom of God is in your midst." The phrase translated 'in your midst' (ἐν τῷ ὑμῶν) is difficult. The usual sense 'within', which would imply the kingdom's presense inside the person, seems unlikely in Luke-Acts. The sense of 'within grasp' is possible, but the more straightforward spatial 'in your midst' does not exclude the sense of 'within grasp', and it fits the Lukan emphasis on the nearness of the kingdom.²¹ Bovon's reading is therefore compelling: "Luke wished to turn our attention away from apocalyptic calculations, expressing doubt and mistrust, in order to orient our attention toward God's presence among his people...".²² The Pharisees, then, are depicted as unable to perceive what is right in front them, even in spite of their ongoing 'scrutiny' of Jesus.

After his brief answer to the Pharisees' question, Jesus turns to address the same subject of the coming of the kingdom with his disciples, this time in terms of the 'day' of the Son of Man (17:24), his 'revelation' (17:30).²³ The eschatological language used here indicates a contrast with Jesus' answer to the Pharisees which emphasised the *presence* or *nearness* of the kingdom (cf. 17:24; 18:8).²⁴ In the

¹⁹ See discussion in the exegetical analysis of the Parable of the Sower above.

²⁰ Darr, "Watch How You Listen," 92.

²¹ BDAG s.v. "ἐν τῷ." Darr defends the sense of "in your grasp", i.e., "within the perceptive ranges of..." (*On Character Building*, 112–14); cf. Darr, "Watch How You Listen," 92; For further discussion see Bovon, *Luke 9:51-19:27*, 2:516.

²² Bovon, *Luke 9:51-19:27*, 2:517.

²³ Green, *Luke*, 627.

²⁴ Carroll, *Luke*, 347.

discourse to the disciples Jesus looks ahead to a time after he has departed from earth (cf. Luke 9:31, 51; 19:11–15; 23:42; cf. 22:29–30), when the disciples will wish to see ‘one of his days’ (17:22), likely a reference to his future return but possibly a reference to ‘one of the days’ of his ministry. Scholars struggle with the referent of the plural ‘days’ in 17:22.²⁵ A simple explanation for the plural, however, is that it conforms to the concept of ‘the days of Noah’ (17:26) and ‘the days of Lot’ (17:28) in the context, where ‘days of’ simply means ‘period of’.²⁶ To summarise the rest of the passage in this light: Though the disciples will wish to see the period of the Son of Man, Jesus’ eschatological return, they will not see it when they wish (17:22). Nor should they follow those who claim that the day has arrived (17:23). For when the day of the Son of Man comes, it will be obvious, like lightning flashing across the sky (17:24).²⁷ But before this period, the Son of Man must ‘suffer many things and be rejected by this generation’ (17:25). The paradigm of rejection preceding vindication and judgment is ‘just as...the days of Noah’ (17:26) and ‘days of Lot’ (17:26), when those respective generations rejected the prophetic warnings that they were given. Such will happen ‘on the day the Son of Man is revealed’ (17:30). Thus Simeon’s warning about opposition to the Messiah should be expected to continue even until that day.²⁸ On that day judgment will come suddenly, and those who are ready will avoid it (either be ‘taken away’ from it or else be ‘left’ for salvation).²⁹

²⁵ For a list of interpretative options, see T J Lang, “‘You Will Desire to See and You Will Not See [It]’: Reading Luke 17.22 as Antanaclosis,” *JSNT* 33.3 (2011): esp. 284–87; cf. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 658–59.

²⁶ Green summarises the oft-perceived problem with this, that “...‘days of x’ refers to the time preceding a terminal event...”, which does not quite fit a reference to the terminal such as “the day” of the Son of Man (*Luke*, 63 n. 60). Seeking such coherence seems unnecessary, however; cf. Carroll, *Luke*, 351.

²⁷ Green, *Luke*, 631.

²⁸ Carroll, *Luke*, 350.

²⁹ It matters little whether judgment awaits the one “taken away” or the one “left”. For discussion see *ibid.*, 353.

Returning, then, to 17:22: What does Jesus mean that the disciples will not ‘see’ (οὐκ ὄψεσθε) what they desire to ‘see’ (ἐπιθυμήσετε...ἰδεῖν)? Lang, leaning on Green, argues that the disciple’s inability to perceive ‘one of the days of the Son of Man’ is in view.³⁰ Lang, however, goes much further than Green: “In my reading, 17:22 is a fortelling of the disciples’ chronic inability to comprehend that the apocalypse of the Son of Man begins with the passion.”³¹ Lang’s interpretation fits well in the larger Lukan narrative where the rhetoric of perception is clear, and his proposal is compatible with the larger argument of this thesis. For his argument to work in the immediate context, however, Lang makes too many questionable interpretative moves.³² Crucially, in spite of the fact that Lang and Green are both correct in emphasising the role of perception language in 17:20–21 and how it corresponds to other passages in Luke, there are few clues in 17:22–37 that the disciples’ *misperception* is in view. The question that the disciples ask in verse 37 is ambiguous, as is Jesus’ answer (cf. Acts 1:6–8), and to posit a precise referent overlooks the ambiguity of similar discourses in Luke-Acts.

3.2.4 Synthesis

In Luke 17:20–37, Jesus speaks to two different audiences about the coming of the kingdom of God. To both he makes a similar statement against claims that some sign has indicated the kingdom’s (or Son of Man’s) arrival (17:21, 23). To the Pharisees

³⁰ Lang, “Reading Luke 17.22”; cf. T J Lang, “‘Where the Body Is, There Also the Eagles Will Be Gathered’: Luke 17:37 and the Arrest of Jesus,” *BibInt* 21.3 (2013): 320–40; Green, *Luke*, 631–34.

³¹ Lang, “Reading Luke 17.22,” 298.

³² To name a few: (1) He overlooks previous clues in Luke-Acts that the Son of Man will go away and return again (as recalled above) (see esp. 12:35–40 for an example of an earlier, similar discourse); (2) Similarly, Lang overlooks or downplays clues in and near this passage that a parousia-like event is in view (e.g., 17:24 and esp. 18:8); (3) He draws questionable parallels between details of the passage and Jesus’ passion. For example, wondering why Luke should change the scene to “night” in 17:34, he posits a parallel with the night of Jesus’ arrest. A far simpler explanation is that “night” simply corresponds to the analogy of two people lying in bed (*ibid.*, 296–97).

Jesus emphasises the *immanence* of the kingdom—it is in their midst (17:21). They should not heed claims that the kingdom has arrived because the kingdom is, in a sense, hidden—near but not visible in the way they expect. In great irony, the supreme clue as to the coming of the kingdom is Jesus, whom the Pharisees have ‘watched’ for some time (cf. Luke 6:7; 14:1; 20:20) but nevertheless have failed to correctly perceive. Their failure to perceive is in part tied up with their poor moral disposition.³³

When Jesus turns to his disciples, he emphasises the eschatological aspects of the kingdom, namely the return of the Son of Man. Though the disciples will wish to see Jesus’ return, they should not heed claims of his return, not because it will be hidden but because it will be so obvious when it actually does occur (17:24; cf. 12:56). The imperative implied for the disciples, then, is to be alert and *faith*-ful (cf. 18:8; 21:34, 36), to heed the prophetic warnings that went unheeded in the days of Noah and Lot (17:26–29).

During the period when the kingdom is near (the emphasis of Luke 17:20–21) but before the future ‘revelation’ of the Son of Man (the emphasis of 17:22–37), the Son of Man ‘first must’ (πρῶτον...δεῖ) ‘suffer many things and be rejected’ (17:25). In light of the concealing and revealing work of God indicated earlier by the rhetoric of perception (e.g., 8:10; 9:45; 10:21–24), Luke’s audience may reasonably find in Luke 17 a subtle clue that the hiddenness of the kingdom in the present (17:20–21) *preserves* the divine δεῖ of Jesus’ suffering.³⁴ It is along these lines that the audience

³³ Darr, *On Character Building*, 92–126.

³⁴ Cf. Dillon, who connects the title “Son of Man” with the notion of the hiddenness of the divine eschatological plan (*Eye-Witnesses*, 42–44); see also Cosgrove, “The Divine Dei in Luke-Acts.”

has been encouraged to understand the misperception of characters, including the disciples. It is to another example of the latter that this study now turns.

3.3 Misunderstanding the Passion (Luke 18:31–34)

The passion prediction in Luke 18:31–33 builds upon the previous (9:22; 9:44; 17:25), detailing the nature of Jesus’ suffering, speaking of his death and resurrection on the third day, indicating that these events will take place in Jerusalem, and most significantly, adding that “...all the things written by the Prophets in reference to the Son of Man will be fulfilled” (18:31–33). Yet, in spite of the teaching and time spent with Jesus on the journey, the disciples do not understand this. As in Luke 9:45, here again the disciples’ misunderstanding is *caused* by the divine concealment of knowledge (18:34).

3.3.1 Passage and Translation (Luke 18:31–34)

Παραλαβὼν δὲ τοὺς δώδεκα εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ, καὶ τελεσθήσεται πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα διὰ τῶν προφητῶν τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· παραδοθήσεται γὰρ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν καὶ ἐμπαιχθήσεται καὶ ὑβρισθήσεται καὶ ἐμπτυσθήσεται καὶ μαστιγώσαντες ἀποκτενοῦσιν αὐτόν, καὶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ ἀναστήσεται. καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐδὲν τούτων συνῆκαν καὶ ἦν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο κεκρυμμένον ἀπ’ αὐτῶν καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκον τὰ λεγόμενα.

But taking the twelve aside he said to them, “Behold we are going up to Jerusalem, and all of the things written in the Prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled: he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and mocked and insulted and spat upon, and after being flogged, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again.” And they understood none of these things, and this statement was hidden from them, and they did not know the things being said.

3.3.2 Literary Context

Luke 18:31–34 occurs near the end of Luke’s travel narrative that began with the anticipation of Jesus’ arrival at Jerusalem (9:51; cf. 19:28–48). Much of the travel

narrative has emphasised the nature of the kingdom of God,³⁵ how the lowly or outcasts are offered a place in the kingdom,³⁶ how one might enter the kingdom,³⁷ be saved,³⁸ or inherit eternal life,³⁹ and no less as the journey to Jerusalem nears its end. Although the disciples have travelled with Jesus and exhibited insight into the significance of his identity and ministry, they have shown an incomplete understanding of his teaching in spite of special revelation (10:17–24; cf. 8:10).⁴⁰

Recall that Luke's travel narrative is made up mostly of alternating Q (or double tradition) and L material.⁴¹ Luke stopped following Mark's basic narrative arrangement at Luke 9:51 (cf. Mark 9:41), taking it up again from Luke 18:15 (cf. Mark 10:13). Luke follows Mark closely through 18:31–34, after which he passes over Mark's pericope concerning the disciples' conflict (Mark 10:35–45; cf. Luke 22:24–27), moving directly to the pericope concerning the healing of the blind beggar, derived from Mark (Luke 18:35–43; cf. Mark 10:46–52). Luke then leaves Mark until the Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:28–40; cf. Mark 11:1–10), inserting the uniquely Lukan Zacchaeus pericope (Luke 19:1–10) and the double-tradition Parable of the Minas (Luke 19:11–27; cf. Matt 25:14–30). As a result of Luke's arrangement, the context surrounding the passion prediction contains the thematically related pericopae of the self-righteous Pharisee and repentant tax collector (18:9–14)—reinforcing the caricature of the Pharisees earlier noted—the welcoming of children (18:15–17), the failure of the rich ruler to forsake his possessions to follow Jesus

³⁵ Luke 10:9, 11; 11:20; 13:18–21; 14:8–15; 17:20–21; 19:11–27.

³⁶ Luke 10:8–12; 13:30; 14:8–15; 14:16–24; 15:1–32; 16:19–31; 18:9–17; 18:18–27; 18:35–43; 19:1–10.

³⁷ Luke 9:57–62; 12:31–34; 13:23–30; 16:16; 18:18–27.

³⁸ Luke 9:56; 13:23–30; 18:26–27; 19:9–10.

³⁹ Luke 10:25–37; cf. 13:3, 5; 16:19–31; 18:18–27, 30.

⁴⁰ Luke 9:45, 46–50, 54–55; 18:15, 34; 19:11.

⁴¹ Additionally, Luke includes certain Markan pericopae, few in number, from various locations in Mark's narrative.

(18:18–27), the disciples who have forsaken possessions to follow Jesus (18:28–30), the healed blind man who follows Jesus (18:35–43), and the salvation of the repentant rich tax collector, Zacchaeus (19:1–10). The context thus emphasises that entrance or participation in the kingdom of God necessitates repentance and a sacrificial following of Jesus, who is about to become the exemplar of self-sacrifice in the city of destination, Jerusalem (18:31–34; cf. 17:25).

In the context following the disciples’ misunderstanding in Luke 18:31–34, it is not uncommon for commentators to note that both the blind man and Zacchaeus—each of whom cannot literally *see* Jesus but nevertheless *recognise* his significance and respond accordingly—appear as a foil to the disciple’s (mis)perception in 18:34. As Culpepper succinctly puts it: “The blind beggar...is an antitype for both the disciples and the rich ruler,” and “...the story of Zacchaeus is coupled with the healing of the blind beggar.”⁴² Culpepper is surely correct to draw many parallels between the two, although his term ‘antitype’ overplays the contrast between the disciples, on the one hand, and the blind man and Zacchaeus on the other.⁴³ Darr’s more moderate comment about the Zacchaeus episode is applicable to both pericopae: The stories are meant “...to buttress the value system that has been developing...”, that is “...to reinforce the value of recognizing and correctly responding when confronted with the divine.”⁴⁴ Morgan also identifies the thoroughfare motif common between the stories of the blind beggar and Zacchaeus, a

⁴² Culpepper, “Seeing the Kingdom,” 438, 440; cf. Hamm, “Sight to the Blind,” 462–65; André Paul, “La guérison de l’aveugle (des aveugles) de Jéricho,” *Foi et vie* 69.3 (1970): 44–69.

⁴³ Hamm draws a number of parallels in Luke 18–19, especially related to sight as a metaphor for discipleship (“Sight to the Blind,” 462–65); Not all of the parallels convince, although particularly intriguing is the echo in the blind beggar of Luke 1:79—“to give light to those who sit in darkness...to guide our feet...” (ibid., 462). This leads Hamm to say that “[t]he true disciple is one who ‘sees’ who Jesus really is and is thereby enabled to follow” (463).

⁴⁴ Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 88.

motif that further highlights spiritual transformation.⁴⁵ With this context in mind, a closer examination of Luke 18:31–34 is in order.

3.3.3 Exegetical Analysis

Like its close parallel (9:43b–45), Luke 18:31–34 is essentially a passion and resurrection prediction from Jesus followed by a description of the disciples' response. In many of the details, Luke once again follows Mark in making the statement a private matter between the disciples and Jesus, and Luke again departs from Mark by tying the statement closely with the preceding scene. The larger narrative suggests that crowds are following Jesus and his disciples on his journey toward Jerusalem (cf. 14:25; 18:15). Presumably a crowd is present when a ruler questions Jesus about what must be done to inherit eternal life (18:18; cf. 18:26). The public discussion following from this question extends through verse 30.⁴⁶ Unlike Mark, Luke does not depict the ruler departing after Jesus' answer (cf. Mark 10:22). Thus a crowd, including the ruler and Jesus' disciples, is present for the discussion in 18:26–30. It is at this point that Jesus takes the twelve aside to give them a private message (18:31). Since the crowds are still following Jesus immediately after this scene (18:35; cf. 19:3, 37), the private meeting depicted in 18:31–34 appears to be a quick aside, perhaps to remind the disciples that before the Son of Man comes in glory and loyal disciples receive rewards for their devotion to Jesus (18:29–30), he must go to Jerusalem and be killed. Indeed, the earlier passion predictions similarly

⁴⁵ *Encountering Images*, 96–97. Morgan offer the following parallels: Luke 18:35–43 (blind beggar); 19:1–10 (Zacchaeus), 36–38 (Triumphal Entry); 24:13–35 (Emmaus); Acts 8:26–40 (Ethiopian); 9:1–22 (Saul/Paul).

⁴⁶ The narrative does not specify whether Jesus' words in vv. 29–30 are directed toward everyone present or just Peter and the other disciples, though the generic answer Jesus gives indicates he was speaking within earshot of everyone present. Thus when Jesus takes the twelve aside in v. 31, it was seemingly to remove them from within earshot of others who were present.

appear after positive events or affirmations focused on Jesus (e.g., in Luke 9:22 after the ministry of the Twelve, feeding of the 5,000, and identification of Jesus as the Messiah; in Luke 9:43b–45 after the miraculous exorcism; and in Luke 17:25 after anticipating the glorious return of the Son of Man).

In Luke 18:31, Jesus begins by saying, “Behold, we are going to Jerusalem” (ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ), which recalls for the reader the destination of the travel narrative (cf. 9:31, 51; 13:33).⁴⁷ Jesus’ arrival anticipates the accomplishment of something central in God’s plan of salvation (cf. 9:31, 51), and it includes the humiliation that Jesus will endure there (cf. 9:22, 44; 17:25). For Luke, this anticipation of Jesus’ suffering is more than the premonition of Jesus; the events that are about to take place in Jerusalem unfold in accordance with the words of the Prophets (18:31). The future passive τελεσθήσεται indicates accomplishment, and in the context of prophecy, fulfilment.⁴⁸ The extent of fulfilment is indicated by the phrase πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα (“all of the things written”). The dative construction τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου denotes the reference of πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα: “all the things written...concerning the Son of Man.”⁴⁹ It is unlikely that a specific text in the Prophets is in view in the phrase διὰ τῶν προφητῶν, especially in light of Luke’s broad view of how the passion and resurrection fulfil the whole of Scripture (cf.

⁴⁷ In Luke 18:31, most of Mark 10:32 is omitted since Luke does not completely change scenes. The compression of Mark’s material thus far allows Luke to more quickly narrate Jesus’ statement. Luke does not use Mark’s ὅτι to introduce the speech, though he follows Mark in beginning Jesus’ statement with ἰδοὺ ἀναβαίνομεν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ (Luke 18:31; Mark 10:33).

⁴⁸ BDAG s.v., “τελέω”; TDNT “τελέω” 8:59–60. On “promise and fulfillment” in Luke-Acts, see: Darrell L. Bock, *Proclamation from Prophecy and Pattern: Lucan Old Testament Christology*, JSNTSup 12 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987); Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*; Rebecca I. Denova, *The Things Accomplished among Us: Prophetic Tradition in the Structural Pattern of Luke-Acts*, JSNTSup 141 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

⁴⁹ It is syntactically possible to take τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου with τελεσθήσεται (cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke (X–XXIV)*, vol. 2, AB 28A [Garden City: Doubleday, 1985]); but it is contextually less probable, especially in view of 24:27, 44 (cf. Plummer, *St. Luke*, 428; Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 690).

24:44–49).⁵⁰ Thus the journey to Jerusalem and the humiliation of the Messiah at the hands of the Gentiles are part and parcel of a divine plan spoken of in the Prophets.

In Luke 18:32, the word *παραδίδωμι* is used once again for the handing over of the Son of Man (18:32; cf. 9:44). All of the verbs in the verse are future passive and fail to specify an agent.⁵¹ The dative phrase *τοῖς ἔθνεσιν* most likely indicates *to whom* the Son of Man will be delivered, not the agent by which the deliverance will occur (though the latter is possible). Further, the context does not specify *who* will be causing the humiliation outlined here (cf. Luke 9:22 where the elders, chief priests, and scribes are named). Even the active verb *ἀποκτενοῦσιν* (18:33) has no expressed subject, though it might assume *τὰ ἔθνη* from the context. What *is* clear is that for Luke the humiliation of Jesus, as well as his resurrection (cf. 9:22), is a fulfilment of the Scriptures.

When Luke later narrates the passion events, a variety of characters cause the humiliation anticipated in 18:32–33: Judas and Peter betray Jesus (22:47–48 and 22:54–62, respectively); Jesus is mocked and beaten by certain Jews (22:63–65), mocked by Herod and his soldiers (23:11) and later by a mixed crowd of people, including rulers and soldiers (23:35–37). The narrative of Luke does not identify who killed Jesus in precise terms, although Acts arguably distributes the brunt of guilt to ‘the Jews’ (e.g., Acts 2:23; 3:13–15; but more evenly in 4:25–28). What becomes clear from Luke’s passion narrative is that a variety of people, Jew and Gentile alike, are implicated in Jesus’ suffering and death. A diversity of characters

⁵⁰ Nolland, for example, notes it is impossible to determine what Scripture Luke may have had in mind, which is of course true, but he suggests it must have included Dan 7:13 given the Son of Man language, even in spite of the fact that Daniel is not among the prophets in the Masoretic division of the canon (*Luke 9:21–18:34*, 2:895). Luke 24:44ff. will be taken up in detail below; cf. Doble, “Luke 24.26, 44.”

⁵¹ Luke omits much of Mark 10:33 which depicts Jesus as speaking of the chief priests and scribes condemning the Son of Man to death.

also act positively: A moment after Jesus' death, a centurion, 'glorifying God', declares that Jesus was 'righteous' (δίκαιος) (23:47); an undefined crowd of people, likely Jews, 'returned, beating their breasts' (τύπτοντες τὰ στήθη ὑπέστρεφον), which is possibly an act of repentance;⁵² a member of the Council that condemned Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea, described as 'good and righteous' (ἀγαθὸς καὶ δίκαιος) and 'waiting for the Kingdom of God' (προσεδέχετο τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ), takes charge of Jesus' body (23:50–53; cf. Simeon in Luke 2:25–35). Add to this that in Luke 18:31, Mark's detail about the role of the chief priests and scribes in the passion (Mark 10:33) is omitted completely (cf. Mark 15:31–32/Luke 23:35). One effect of Luke's generalising of 'who did what' is to reinforce the point that the significance of the passion, regardless of those implicated, is the suffering of the Son of Man and his resurrection *according to the Scriptures* (18:31; 24:25–27, 44–49; cf. Acts 2:23; 3:13–15; 4:25–28).

The response of the disciples to Jesus' statement mirrors that of Luke 9:45.⁵³ The first and third clause of 18:34 contain two verbs for understanding, different from those used in 9:45 (συνίημι and γινώσκω in 18:34; cf. ἀγνοέω and αἰσθάνομαι in 9:45), which together emphasise the disciples' lack of comprehension. The first clause uses an aorist verb, depicting the simple action of the disciples' misunderstanding of 'these things' on the narrative mainline (καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐδὲν τούτων συνῆκαν). The second clause, an explanatory clause with καί with a pluperfect periphrastic, offers the reason for misunderstanding: "This statement was hidden from them" (καὶ ἦν τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο κεκρυμμένον ἀπ' αὐτῶν). As in 9:45, the pluperfect

⁵² Dillon suggests a foreshadowing of repentance at 23:48 (*Eye-Witnesses*, 55 n. 160).

⁵³ Note that Mark does not have a parallel to Luke 18:34. Thus Luke can be seen here as creating a parallel to Luke 9:45, which itself was a modification of Mark 9:32 (as earlier discussed).

construction in 18:34 marks supplemental material, off the narrative mainline. This is followed by the third clause which offers more offline material with the use of the imperfect: “and they were not understanding the things being said” (καὶ οὐκ ἐγίνωσκον τὰ λεγόμενα). The imperfective aspect of both ἐγίνωσκον and τὰ λεγόμενα depicts the actions of the verbs as unfolding, and serves both to underscore the extent of misunderstanding as well as the result of the concealment of meaning.⁵⁴

As in 9:45, in 18:34 Luke does not indicate the details of the misunderstanding. Jesus’ statement about his passion and resurrection is quite straightforward.⁵⁵ It is possible that the disciples could not understand any one or combination of the following: (1) Jesus would suffer and die; (2) Jesus would rise from the dead; or (3) His suffering and resurrection (and related events) are ‘written by the Prophets’. Looking ahead to the eventual understanding of the disciples at the end of the Third Gospel is instructive: “Then [Jesus] opened their mind to understand [τοῦ συνιέναι] the Scriptures” (24:45). There the object of understanding is the Scriptures, including, in the context, their fulfilment in the events of Jesus’ life and ministry (24:44). In this light it appears that their misunderstanding seems to primarily concern the *significance* of the events Jesus predicts, especially how the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah fit into God’s plan revealed in the Scriptures.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Cf. comments above on Luke 9:45 and imperfective aspect. On the use of καὶ to indicate consequence (i.e., “and so,”), see BDAG s.v. “καὶ” 1.b.ζ.

⁵⁵ As Marshall says, “[Jesus’] statement is so clear that it is difficult to see how they could have been so blind” (*Gospel of Luke*, 691).

⁵⁶ Along these lines Bovon rightly says of the misunderstanding in Luke 18:34: “...Luke was thinking less of the evidence of the facts than of their significance according to God’s plan” (*Luke 9:51-19:27*, 2:575); Cf. Frein who says, “What is hidden from the disciples, therefore, is not only the meaning of Jesus’ words but also the understanding of scripture” (“Misunderstanding,” 335).

Besides the question of *what* the disciples do not understand is the question of *how* they do not. In light of earlier depictions of the disciples as insiders privy to special revelation (esp. Luke 8:10; 9:20; 10:21–24) and the probability of God’s role in preventing understanding in 9:45 (cf. 8:10–18; 10:21–24 and earlier discussion), it is best to see the passive construction (ἡν...κεκρυμμένον) as indicating divine agency. Marshall is right to suggest, then, that “...the strong stress on the matter being hidden from the disciples suggests that a divine ‘veiling’ of what was said is in view.”⁵⁷ Others, perhaps influenced by the subsequent story of the blind beggar (18:35–43) or the harsher profile of the disciples in Mark’s Gospel, emphasise here the failure of the disciples in terms of their ‘blindness’⁵⁸ and ‘dramatic deficiency’⁵⁹ or their characterisation in the narrative as ‘blind and unknowledgeable’.⁶⁰ However, numerous indications in Luke have been considered already that suggest (1) God conceals knowledge in accordance with his plan of salvation, and (2) such concealment is temporary. In view of the final illumination in Luke 24:45, it is reasonable to see in 18:34 (and 9:45) just this, a temporary divine veiling that serves God’s plan of salvation, what Dillon calls, “...a purposeful schedule of concealment and disclosure, divinely appointed.”⁶¹ The coherence of this view will receive further development in the section below on Luke 24.⁶²

⁵⁷ Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 691. Note that Marshall appears open to various possibilities.

⁵⁸ Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, 2:896; cf. Culpepper, “Seeing the Kingdom,” 438.

⁵⁹ Bovon, *Luke 9:51–19:27*, 2:691.

⁶⁰ Frein, “Misunderstanding,” 338.

⁶¹ Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 133.

⁶² For a fuller discussion of possible objections to the divine passive, see the section on Luke 9:43–45 above.

3.3.4 Synthesis

Luke 18:31–34 underscores for the audience a significant claim of Luke’s narrative, that God’s plan of salvation, culminating in the Messiah’s suffering and resurrection in Jerusalem, is a fulfilment of the Scriptures (cf. 24:25, 27, 44–46). What the audience is encouraged to affirm the disciples do not (yet) fully understand, in spite of their status in the narrative as insiders. Their misunderstanding stems not from the complexity of the content nor, it would seem, from a poor disposition,⁶³ but from divine concealment: God has prevented the disciples from understanding for the moment, though he will finally grant complete understanding through Jesus’ illumination (24:45). The result is that Luke preserves the ‘fact’ of the disciples’ misunderstanding contained in his source(s) while offering an explanation that preserves their credibility and fits within the strong view of divine providence that Luke advances in the narrative. The concealment also creates suspense, encouraging the audience to raise the question of when or whether the disciples will finally understand.⁶⁴ Not far in the background is Simeon’s prophecy, given at the outset, that Jesus would be a ‘sign to be contested’, ‘appointed for the rise and fall of many in Israel’ (2:34–35). This division will become more palpable in the so-called Triumphal Entry narrative, which will be examined next.

3.4 Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41–44)

Following the ascription of ‘king’ to Jesus by a crowd of disciples (Luke 19:36–38) is Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem’s rejection of him (19:41–44). In a sense this should not surprise the audience, for Jerusalem has been unequivocally named as the

⁶³ See discussion above of the moral dimension of perception in relation to Luke 8—9.

⁶⁴ Frein, “Misunderstanding,” 338.

culmination of Jesus' ministry and the place of his death (as recently as 18:31). The city's failure as well as its judgment is described with the rhetoric of perception: What they have not recognised God will now hide from them, recalling the earlier warning to 'watch how you listen', for the one who does not will be left with nothing (8:18).

3.4.1 Passage and Translation (Luke 19:41–44)

Καὶ ὡς ἤγγισεν ἰδὼν τὴν πόλιν ἔκλαυσεν ἐπ' αὐτὴν λέγων ὅτι εἰ ἔγνων ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ καὶ σὺ τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην· νῦν δὲ ἐκρύβη ἀπὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου. ὅτι ἤξουσιν ἡμέραι ἐπὶ σέ καὶ παρεμβалоῦσιν οἱ ἐχθροί σου χάρακά σοι καὶ περικυκλώσουσίν σε καὶ συνέξουσίν σε πάντοθεν, καὶ ἐδαφιοῦσίν σε καὶ τὰ τέκνα σου ἐν σοί, καὶ οὐκ ἀφήσουσιν λίθον ἐπὶ λίθον ἐν σοί, ἀνθ' ὧν οὐκ ἔγνων τὸν καιρὸν τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς σου.

And as he neared, when he saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "If only you too recognised on this day the things that make for peace. But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you and encircle you and press you hard on every side, and raze you to the ground and your children with you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not recognise the time of your visitation."

3.4.2 Literary Context

Jesus' arrival to Jerusalem has been anticipated since Luke 9:51, and the audience has been reminded of this destination many times since (9:53; 13:22, 31–35; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28, 41). The narrative has set up the expectation that the events of Jesus' life will culminate in Jerusalem, including his death (esp. 13:31–35; 18:31). Much of the travel narrative (Luke 9—19) has further reinforced the divided responses of people to Jesus (cf. 2:34–35).⁶⁵ Near the journey's end, these divided responses are

⁶⁵ Frank J. Matera, highlighting the conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders, suggests, "One of the narrative functions of the journey section therefore, is to inform the reader why and how Jesus came into conflict with Israel" ("Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9.51-19.46): A Conflict with Israel," *JSNT* 51 [1993]: 76). As this thesis has emphasised, a central theme in Luke has to do with

illustrated by the positive response of the blind beggar (in contrast to the crowd) (18:35–43), Zacchaeus (19:1–10), and the faithful slaves in the Parable of the Minas (in contrast to the city that rejects the king) (19:11–27).⁶⁶

The so-called Triumphal Entry (19:28–44), in which Jesus rides a colt toward Jerusalem near the Mount of Olives, further accentuates this theme of divided response. Jesus takes the posture of a king and is lauded by a crowd of disciples who affirm his status by applying Psalm 118:26 to the miracle-working rider (19:35–38).⁶⁷ The Pharisees, seemingly ever-present at times like these, call on Jesus to rebuke these disciples (19:39). Jesus returns their serve forcefully, saying, “If they keep silent, the stones will cry out” (19:40). It is at this point that Jesus, upon seeing Jerusalem, weeps over it (19:41). It is his prophetic word that follows which demands further attention.

3.4.3 Exegetical Analysis

In Luke 19:41, Jesus sees the city that does not see him, and he weeps: It is ‘when he saw the city’ (ἰδὼν τὴν πόλιν) that he ‘wept over it’ (ἐκλαυσεν ἐπ’ αὐτήν). Notice the language of perception in his prophetic word that follows:

‘If only you *recognised*...

‘...they have been *hidden* from your eyes.’ (ἐκρύβη) (19:43)

‘...you did not *recognise*...

Jesus here addresses the city corporately: Jerusalem will suffer judgment, described in some detail as a militaristic defeat in which the city is razed because it has not

divided responses to Jesus, and thus largely agrees with Matera. One exception is Matera’s conception of the conflict as between Jesus and Israel. It seems better to see the conflict within Israel (as the earlier discussion of Luke 2:34–35 demonstrated); cf. Green, *Luke*, 681.

⁶⁶ Strauss, *Davidic Messiah*, 306–316.

⁶⁷ Carroll, *Luke*, 384–86.

recognised its divine visitation (cf. 1:68), its messiah.⁶⁸ It is a city that Jesus said ‘kills the prophets and stones those sent to it’ (13:34; cf. 11:50). Nevertheless, Jesus has great affection for it: “How often I wanted to gather your children as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not” (13:34; cf. 23:28).

Jerusalem’s rejection is explained by Jesus in the language of obduracy, familiar in the Prophets.⁶⁹ They have not recognised (ἔγνως) (19:43, 44) what makes for peace, and it has been hidden from them (ἐκρύβη) (19:43).⁷⁰ The adverb νῦν + an aorist often denotes ‘an action of condition is beginning in the present’ that is ‘in contrast to the past’ (19:42), and thus νῦν δὲ ἐκρύβη would indicate a new state of obduracy.⁷¹ So the action of concealment, likely a divine passive, is a result of (and a judgment against) their rejection of Jesus, a view that Marshall describes as “...the action of God who has given up the city...”.⁷² This concealment, thus, is of a different kind than that of Luke 9:45 or 18:34. Recall from the earlier discussion of the obduracy motif (esp. present in Luke 8:10–16) that in Isaiah this kind of hardened state might be brought about by one’s own vices and/or by God himself.⁷³

Jerusalem’s failure is also described with a temporal marker, ‘on this day’ (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ) (19:42) (cf. νῦν and τὸν καιρόν) (19:42, 44; cf. 12:56). The subtle implication is that the city has missed its opportunity to receive Jesus as king

⁶⁸ BDAG s.v. “ἐπισκοπή.” Cf. Ibid., 387. Note the corporate nature of the judgment here will be revisited in the discussion of Acts 28 below.

⁶⁹ See the earlier discussion of the use of Isaiah in the Parable of the Sower, above.

⁷⁰ Hamm, who picks up the perception language here and in the parallel passage of 13:31–35, suggests that the sense “see” in 13:35 is “to perceive”. Thus the prophecy of 13:35 is fulfilled when the disciples correctly recognise Jesus in 19:38 (“Sight to the Blind,” 471). Against this is the fact that Luke 19 does not appear to encourage the reader to see the “disciples” who praise Jesus as part of Jerusalem. Even so, Luke 13:31–35 creates irony with Luke 19 in that the city will indeed “see” Jesus (literally) but not perceive him.

⁷¹ BDAG s.v. “νῦν.”

⁷² Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 718; cf. Carroll, *Luke*, 387.

⁷³ Evans, *To See and Not Perceive*, 46.

precisely *by not showing up for it*. Brent Kinman makes a compelling case that in fact Luke envisions here a regal *παρουσία* in which an ancient audience would expect the attendance of leading citizens and religious leaders.⁷⁴ The Pharisees' criticism (19:39; cf. 19:47–48) and the absence of many besides 'the crowd of disciples' (19:37) would be understood, therefore, as a great offence to a king.⁷⁵ Thus Jerusalem has shown itself as unable (or unwilling) to rightly perceive Jesus, and so the city has ended up on the wrong side of Simeon's prophecy in Luke 2:34.⁷⁶

3.4.4 Synthesis

As has been observed thus far, Luke's narrative encourages the evaluation of characters based on whether or not they correctly perceive Jesus.⁷⁷ The so-called Triumphal Entry offers the audience another opportunity for this, reinforcing the insider-outsider distinction earlier noted. As Frein says, "Jesus' lament in 19,41–44 reminds readers that what is necessary for peace is the recognition of Jesus as the anointed of God (see 19,38)."⁷⁸ Although a crowd of disciples essentially receives him as king, the city of destination, Jerusalem, rejects him, giving way to Jesus' lament and prophecy of the city's destruction. In fact, Jerusalem's rejection appears to reverse earlier expectations (cf. 1:68, 18, 79), showing "...that opponents to the

⁷⁴ "Parousia, Jesus' 'A-Triumphal' Entry, and the Fate of Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-44)," *JBL* 118.2 (1999): 279–94.

⁷⁵ Note how, in the context, Luke stresses Jesus' regal identity (Luke 18:38–39; 19:11–27; 19:30/Zech 9:9). This may also be seen by Luke's redaction of Mark (e.g., Luke inserts "the King" into the Psalm quotation). For a more complete discussion, see *ibid.*, 284–89; cf. Matera, "Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9.51-19.46)," 74.

⁷⁶ See the discussion of Luke 2:34–35 in chapter 2 above. Tucker S. Ferda has recently made a compelling case that Isaiah 52 lies behind Jesus' disappointment: "for Jesus, as God's anointed 'herald', embodies God's advent to redeem Jerusalem, yet Jerusalem's inability to 'see' 'this day' also disappoints the fulfilment of these hopes" ("Reason to Weep: Isaiah 52 and the Subtext of Luke's Triumphal Entry," *JTS* 66.1 [2015]: 30). If correct, this view heightens the significance of Jerusalem's rejection even further.

⁷⁷ Darr, *On Character Building*; I was pleased to find at a late stage in this thesis Tucker Ferda's article with the following comment: "All told, then, it is clear that the triumphal entry typifies what John Darr called Luke's 'rhetoric of perception' ..." (Ferda, "Reason to Weep," 40).

⁷⁸ Frein, "Misunderstanding," 338.

Jesus mission are like those Pharisees and Scribes who, by refusing to be baptized by John, ‘rejected God’s purpose [τὴν βουλήν] for themselves’ (Luke 7:30).”⁷⁹

Jerusalem’s rejection is described in the language of obduracy familiar in the Prophets: Jerusalem has not recognised its time of visitation and so God has given it over to blindness. The audience is encouraged to identify with the crowd of disciples who, like the blind beggar who recognises Jesus as ‘Son of David’ (18:39), correctly identifies Jesus as king with Psalm 118. Soon, however, the faithfulness of the disciples will be tested as their master is arrested and crucified. Rather than emphasise the misperception of his disciples during Jesus’ passion, however, the narrative focuses on their lingering doubts *after* Jesus’ resurrection. It is to these climactic episodes of Luke 24 and their preceding context that the thesis now turns.

3.5 Slow Hearts and Opened Minds (Luke 24)

From the first moment when Jesus’ enters Jerusalem (Luke 19:45), conflict with the religious leadership escalates, leading eventually to Jesus’ arrest. What the audience has seen—the very fact hidden from the disciples (9:45; 18:34)—is that the Messiah’s suffering is a *must*. It is written in the Scriptures (18:31). From this perspective, Jesus’ crucifixion is not a surprise. Somewhat surprising, however, is that the character who most clearly exemplifies understanding during the passion is one of the criminals crucified with Jesus (24:40–42): he demonstrates faith that Jesus is the Messiah even amidst the crucifixion. Attention returns to Jesus’ own followers in chapter 24, where the key conflict of misunderstanding created by the rhetoric of perception finally reaches its resolution. What enables the disciples to finally

⁷⁹ Ferda, “Reason to Weep,” 38–39; Carroll, *Luke*, 387.

understand is not simply the fact of the empty tomb (24:4, 12, 22–24), remembering Jesus’ teaching (24:8), receiving Jesus’ own exposition of the Scriptures about himself (24:27), or seeing Jesus alive (24:31, 34, 36–43). The key resolution comes with supernatural illumination: Jesus ‘opens their mind to understand the Scriptures’ (24:45).

3.5.1 Passages and Translation (Luke 24:11–12, 16, 31–32, 44–46)

καὶ ἐφάνησαν ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν ὥσπερ λῆρος τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, καὶ ἠπίστουν αὐταῖς. Ὁ δὲ Πέτρος ἀναστὰς ἔδραμεν ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον καὶ παρακύψας βλέπει τὰ ὀθόνια μόνα, καὶ ἀπῆλθεν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν θαυμάζων τὸ γεγονός. (24:11–12)

But these words appeared to them as nonsense and they did not believe them. But rising up, Peter ran to the tomb, and stooping to look, he saw only the linen cloths. And he went home, marvelling at what happened.

οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγινῶναι αὐτόν. (24:16)

Now their eyes were seized so as not to recognise him.

αὐτῶν δὲ διηνοιχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν· καὶ αὐτὸς ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ’ αὐτῶν. καὶ εἶπαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους· οὐχὶ ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν καιομένη ἦν ὥς ἐλάλει ἡμῖν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, ὥς διήνοιγεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφάς; (24:31–32)

Now their eyes were opened and they recognised him. And he vanished from them. And they said to one another, “Were our hearts not burning as he spoke to us on the way, as he opened to us the Scriptures?”

Εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι μου οὓς ἐλάλησα πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔτι ὦν σὺν ὑμῖν, ὅτι δεῖ πληρωθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως καὶ τοῖς προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς περὶ ἐμοῦ. τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς· καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὕτως γέγραπται παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ...

Now he said to them, “These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that it was necessary to fulfil all of the things written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms.” Then he opened their mind to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, “Thus it stands written, that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day...”

3.5.2 Literary Context

At this point in the narrative of Luke, the audience is well primed to compare how various groups and individuals respond to Jesus. The final chapters of the Gospel offer many opportunities to do so. At the end of the travel narrative, Jesus' first action upon arriving in Jerusalem is his confrontation and rebuke of traders at the temple (19:45–46). This is followed by a summary statement that offers a contrast of two groups of people: The chief priests, scribes, and other prominent people, who were 'seeking to destroy him' (ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν ἀπολέσαι), and those who were 'hanging' on his words (ἐξεκρέματο αὐτοῦ ἀκούων) (19:47–48). The elites are thus once again depicted as *seeking* Jesus in order to do him harm (cf. οὐχ εὕρισκον τὸ τί ποιήσωσιν) (19:48; cf. 6:7; 14:1; 20:19, 20, 26, 40).⁸⁰ The people (ὁ λαός), by contrast, are depicted as paying close attention (lit. 'hanging on his words') (cf. Luke 8:16; 20:45).⁸¹

The conflict with the religious elite occupies the narrative from Jesus' entrance into the temple (19:45) until Jesus, in the midst of 'the people', turns to address the disciples (20:45–47). These elite are depicted as utterly impotent: they 'did not know' (20:7), 'feared the people' (20:19; cf. 22:2), 'were unable to catch him' and 'became silent' (20:26), and 'no longer dared to ask him anything' (20:40).⁸² They do not rightly perceive Jesus, his authority (20:2, 8), his relationship to God (20:9–16), nor his identity as the Messiah (20:41–44). Jesus' final word

⁸⁰ See also the discussion under 'Literary Context' of the Parable of the Sower, above.

⁸¹ Jerome Kodell has shown how Luke uses λαός differently in various parts of Luke and Acts. He rightly observes that in "the Jerusalem Narrative," it is "used to distinguish the people friendly to Jesus and his teachings from the leaders who were plotting his death..." ("Luke's Use of Laos, 'People,' Especially in the Jerusalem Narrative: Lk 19:28–24:53," *CBQ* 31.3 [1969]: 328); cf. Gottfried Rau, "Das Volk in der lukanischen Passionsgeschichte eine Konjektur zu Lk 23:13," *ZNW* 56.1–2 (1965): 41–51.

⁸² Note that Jesus withholds any explanation of his authority from his opponents (20:8; cf. 8:10, 16; 10:21–22).

amidst this conflict, addressing the disciples within earshot of ‘the people’, is that ‘[the Scribes] will receive greater judgment’ (20:47).

The conflict with Jesus continues to escalate to the point of involving a betrayal from one of Jesus’ own. The leadership wants to kill Jesus, but they must first find a way to get him away from the crowds who supported him (22:2, 6). At this point, Luke moves directly to Judas’ collusion with the religious leaders, having already narrated Mark’s anointing at Bethany (Mark 14:3–9/Luke 7:36–50). Luke precedes this story with a key detail: Satan ‘enters’ Judas (22:3). The καί that follows in 22:4, then, implies the result of the Satanic influence: ‘and he went away and discussed...’ (22:4; cf. 8:12).⁸³ Soon after, during the Passover meal, Jesus says his betrayer is at the table (22:21–22), leading the disciples to question one another about it (συζητεῖν) (22:3) and then argue (φιλονεικία) about who was the greatest (22:24). Does this indicate a failure of understanding on the part of the disciples?⁸⁴ Certainly Jesus’ explanation that follows shows that the disciples’ concern for greatness is wrong-headed (22:25–27), but the following facts suggest that misperception and failure are not *primarily* in view: (1) the language of perception is not used here as it is elsewhere (e.g., as precedes a parallel passage in 9:46–50); (2) in his response, Jesus emphasises the previous *loyalty* of the disciples (22:28), not misunderstanding, and further promises them positions of power in the future (22:29–30).⁸⁵

Just as Luke posits the influence of Satan on Judas’ betrayal, so he does when anticipating Peter’s betrayal (22:31, 34). In the context, Jesus’ instruction to Peter

⁸³ BDAG s.v. “καί.” This is not unlike the explanation Luke adds (to his source) for the disciples’ misunderstanding (Luke 9:45; 18:34).

⁸⁴ Carroll, *Luke*, 438.

⁸⁵ Contra Green, who likens the disciples’ behavior with that of Judas, who “...had positioned himself over against the divine project...” (*Luke*, 767).

implies that the other disciples will falter, as they will need strengthening, and Peter will ultimately turn again to be loyal (ποτε ἐπιστρέψας) (22:32). Again, the failure of the disciples is not spoken of here in terms of the rhetoric of perception familiar in the narrative. Rather, Luke appears to weave the influence of evil powers (22:3, 31) and human opposition (22:2, 3–6) with the predetermined plan of God (22:22, 37, 42; cf. Acts 2:23; 4:27–28). Even the failure of the disciples to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane is, for Luke, explained by sleepiness ‘from sorrow’ (ἀπό τῆς λύπης) (22:45).⁸⁶

When narrating Peter’s three-fold betrayal, however, Luke retains Mark’s perception language, namely in two occurrences of οἶδα in the first and third denials, respectively:

‘I do not know him’ (οὐκ οἶδα αὐτόν) (Luke 22:57)

‘I do not know what you are saying’ (οὐκ οἶδα ὃ λέγεις) (Luke 22:60)

Interestingly, the first denial in Mark uses an additional verb of perception (ἐπίσταμαι), and Luke’s first and third denials reverse Mark’s in the use of the syntactical object of the knowing verbs (i.e., ‘know *him*’ in Luke 22:57; ‘know *what you are saying*’ in 22:60).⁸⁷

How great the irony that Peter, who has been ‘granted to know the mysteries’ (8:10) and correctly *recognised* that Jesus is the Messiah (9:20) here claims not to even *know* Jesus. The betrayal feels imminent already in 22:54 when Peter is ‘following from afar’ (ἡκολούθει μακρόθεν), a far cry from Peter’s claim he would go ‘to prison and to death’ with Jesus (22:33). The scene culminates in the moment

⁸⁶ Mark and Matthew narrate a stronger rebuke from Jesus and give the reason for sleepiness as ‘heavy eyes’ (Mark 14:40/Matt 26:43).

⁸⁷ Cf. Mark 14:68 and 14:71. Matthew’s final two denials each are claims by Peter not to know ‘the man’ (26:72, 74).

when ‘the Lord looked directly at Peter’, causing Peter to remember Jesus’ prediction of the three-fold denial (22:61; cf. 22:34). Peter’s remorse is depicted in 22:62: ‘going out, he wept’. The audience is thus left in some suspense about Peter’s faith, although the earlier indication of 22:32 is that he will ultimately remain faithful. Whatever suspense about Peter the audience feels will begin to ease in the Gospel’s final chapter (from 24:12).

From this point, Jesus will now appear before numerous persons attempting to evaluate his identity and the charges brought against him. Specifically, issues related to perception come to the fore when Jesus is before the Council (22:67–70), Herod (23:8–12), and in conversation with two criminals (23:39–43). First, the Council of ‘chief priests and scribes’ (22:66) asks Jesus to tell them if he is the Messiah (22:67a). In his response, Jesus claims that they *will not believe* him if he tells them (οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε) (22:67b), reaffirming for the audience the narrative’s characterisation of the religious leaders as outsiders who will not rightly perceive Jesus’ identity. The scene also recalls the last line of Jesus’ story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, told to the Pharisees (16:14): “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead” (16:31).⁸⁸ When the Council comes back with another question, they seek clarity about whether Jesus is claiming to be the Son of God, to which Jesus responds with a rather cryptic affirmation on which his opponents nonetheless pounce (22:69–71; cf. 23:3).⁸⁹ While they appear to understand Jesus’ claim (insofar as they take offence), they obviously believe it be a false claim (23:2; cf. 22:67b).

⁸⁸ Although note that Luke has modified Mark such that Jesus’ answer to the Council does not so obviously echo Scripture (Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 850).

⁸⁹ For a fuller discussion of the issues, see David R. Catchpole, “The Answer of Jesus to Caiaphas (Matt. Xxvi. 64),” *NTS* 17 (1971): 213–226.

After the Council brings Jesus before Pilate, Pilate sends Jesus before Herod, a scene unique to Luke's 'trial' narrative among the Evangelists. Recall from previous discussion that Herod's confusion about Jesus' identity earlier in the narrative leads him to 'seek to see' Jesus (9:7–9), a malicious interest in light of Herod's role as a king and, in that context, his execution of John the Baptist. This earlier passage prepares the audience for the dramatic encounter between Jesus and Herod now, where Herod is described as wanting 'to see Jesus for a long time' and was 'hoping to see a sign' from him (23:8). Darr rightly comments that introducing Herod this way "...evokes the entire 'seeing-hearing-recognizing' theme that plays such an important role in the entire narrative."⁹⁰ Jesus, however, 'answers [Herod] nothing' (οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ) (23:9). Jesus' silence in the face of this ruler leaves Herod an outsider, one who 'seeing does not see' (cf. Luke 8:10), a ruler who longs to see and hear but cannot (cf. 10:24).⁹¹ With irony, Jesus' silence *mocks* Herod, whose soldiers mock Jesus (23:11).

Jesus returns to Pilate (23:11), who is characterised in more or less neutral terms compared to Herod, and Pilate finds no warrant in the charges (23:14–16, 20, 22). Nevertheless, the crowd prevails and Pilate sentences Jesus to be crucified (23:23–25). On his way to the place of crucifixion, Jesus addresses the 'daughters of Jerusalem', warning of future judgment and recalling his earlier lament that Jerusalem has not 'recognised' the time of divine visitation (19:44).

Shortly after this, a similar chord is struck by Jesus' words, which appear in some manuscripts: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know (οἴδασιν) what they are doing' (23:34a). It is difficult to determine with certainty whether this longer

⁹⁰ Darr, *Herod the Fox*, 193.

⁹¹ Ibid., 197; cf. Dicken, *Herod as a Composite*, 95–124.

reading belongs to the earliest text of Luke because the evidence is quite evenly divided between it and the shorter reading.⁹² If the longer reading is taken into account, then between Mark's 'they crucified him' and the description of the soldiers casting lots (Mark 15:24), Luke first brings forward the detail about the two criminals on Jesus' right and left (Mark 15:27) and then adds the new sentence, Jesus' prayer (Luke 23:34). The imperfect ἔλεγεν, introducing Jesus' speech, depicts unfolding action off the narrative mainline, which is composed of the main verbs of the clauses before and after the prayer, ἐσταύρωσαν ('they crucified') and ἔβαλον ('they cast').⁹³ The effect is to reinforce the sense that Jesus' prayer is very much *in the midst* of the actions of his executioners. In this light, 'Father, forgive *them* (αὐτοῖς)' is most naturally a request for the forgiveness of those (Romans) involved in the act of crucifying Jesus (23:32, 33).⁹⁴ The αὐτοῖς could extend to the Jewish leaders and others who clamoured for Jesus' crucifixion (cf. Acts 3:17), but the notion of 'mitigated culpability' would stand in some tension with the sense of finality in the judgment pronounced against Jerusalem just before (23:28–31), which harkens back to similar words of judgment against Jerusalem (13:32–35; 19:42–44).⁹⁵ Grounds for forgiveness follow: 'for they do not know what they are doing'.

⁹² For a review of issues, see Nathan Eubank, "A Disconcerting Prayer: On the Originality of Luke 23:34a," *JBL* 129.3 (2010): 521–36. Eubank's main contribution is to show how the meaning of the longer reading was debated in early Christianity. He concludes that the longer reading is earlier and was "omitted fairly early" for theological reasons (536); cf. Bovon who argues along similar lines (*Luke 3: Commentary on 19:28–24:53*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James E. Crouch, vol. 3, 3 vols., Hermeneia [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012], 306–7); For an argument in favour of the shorter reading, see Jason Whitlark and Mikeal C. Parsons, "The 'Seven' Last Words: A Numerical Motivation for the Insertion of Luke 23.34a," *NTS* 52.2 (2006): 188–204.

⁹³ Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 191; Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 45 n. 3.

⁹⁴ For the various early Christian views on the meaning of "forgive them", see Eubank, "A Disconcerting Prayer," esp. 528–35.

⁹⁵ Note that the view taken here (that αὐτοῖς refers to the soldiers) does not preclude, for Luke-Acts, either future forgiveness of Jews nor the role of ignorance in the actions of the Jewish leadership (cf. Acts 3:17). Further, this study has found little evidence of the "ignorance motif" of Acts—

This ignorance (οὐ...οἶδασιν) of present actions (τί ποιοῦσιν) would certainly fit the situation of the soldiers, who are not presented in the narrative as actively rejecting Jesus' claims to be the Messiah (and sometimes presented quite favourably) (cf. 23:4, 11, 14–15, 20, 22, 47).⁹⁶

During Jesus' crucifixion, there are those who actively participate in the abuse of Jesus, including the rulers (23:35), soldiers (23:36–37), and one of the criminals (23:39). There are also those who watch—their observation depicted with various verbs of sense-perception (23:35, 47, 48, 49). It is not clear in every case, however, where those in the latter group stand as it relates to understanding Jesus. The centurion's praise of God and declaration of Jesus as righteous (23:47) is suggestive,⁹⁷ and the crowds who 'return, beating their breasts' (23:48) may in fact be responding to the centurion's affirmation with repentance.⁹⁸ However, two characters are much more clearly presented as positive models of perception: one of the criminals crucified with Jesus and Joseph of Arimathea. First, in an exchange unique to Luke, one of the criminals, rebuking the other for insulting Jesus, not only affirms Jesus' innocence (23:41; cf. 23:47) but expresses faith that Jesus will in fact

especially the notion that Israel's leaders acted in ignorance (Acts 3:17; 13:27)—in the Third Gospel itself (contra *ibid.*, 524–26).

⁹⁶ But it must said, if the prayer refers to the ignorance of the Jewish leaders, the fact of their lack of understanding is neither new nor surprising in the narrative, as has been shown. It is obvious that they do not believe they are killing their Messiah, just a pretender. However, the implication that God ought to forgive the Jewish leaders on the grounds of their ignorance would be surprising. Furthermore, I am not convinced that passages like Acts 3:17 or Acts 13:27 indicate “mitigated culpability” for reasons that will be addressed in discussing those passages below (again, contra *ibid.*, 524–25).

⁹⁷ Dillon reasons that Luke's redaction of Mark's centurion is to emphasis the “righteous one” who is “vindicated by God in spite of the human onslaught against him,” as in Psalm 31, from which Jesus' words just before are taken (23:46) (Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 100–1); cf. Carroll, who similarly finds here “public vindication of the suffering righteous one (as in Ps 22)” (Carroll, *Luke*, 471).

⁹⁸ Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 280.

‘come into [his] kingdom’ (ἐλθης εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν σου) (23:42).⁹⁹ Jesus’ response, a promise of paradise on that very day, reinforces for the audience that his interlocutor has spoken well (23:43).¹⁰⁰ The words of this lowly person—a criminal(!)—amount to an affirmation that Jesus is the Messiah (cf. 23:39), an act of faith at what might be considered the most unlikely of times, while Jesus is hanging on a cross. A criminal, then, appears to have understood what has remained concealed from Jesus’ own disciples, that is Jesus’ *messianic suffering*.

A second unlikely character emerges as a positive example: a member of the Council, Joseph of Arimathea (23:50–56).¹⁰¹ After the narrator explicitly affirms Joseph’s innocence in Jesus’ death, Joseph is described as ‘looking for the kingdom of God’ (προσεδέχετο τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ) (23:51), harkening back to Simeon, Anna and others, ‘looking for’ (προσδέχομαι) the ‘consolation of Israel’ (παράκλησιν τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ) (2:25) and the ‘redemption of Jerusalem’ (λύτρωσιν Ἱερουσαλήμ) (2:38).¹⁰² Joseph asks Pilate for Jesus’ body and proceeds to give it proper burial (23:52–53). What should the audience make of this character given this depiction? It is not unreasonable to assume that he had become a disciple of Jesus (cf. Matt 27:57;

⁹⁹ The text is somewhat unstable here. The main issue is whether the sense is “come/go into (εἰς) your kingdom”, likely referring in Luke’s scheme to Jesus’ ascension to God’s right hand, or “come with (ἐν) your kingdom”, referring to Jesus’ second coming. Furthermore, the senses of εἰς and ἐν I implied in my translation above are not mutually exclusive, so resolving the textual problem does not completely resolve the question of its meaning. However, what is important for this thesis is to affirm the more basic fact that the criminal’s words show faith in Jesus’ messianic identity, even amidst Jesus’ suffering. For a discussion of the textual issues, see Bovon, *Luke 19:28-24:53*, 3:311; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 154.

¹⁰⁰ On Luke’s view of “paradise” and how it might relate to the kingdom, see Grant Macaskill, “Paradise in the New Testament,” in *Paradise in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Views*, ed. Markus Bockmuehl and Guy G. Stroumsa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 64–81.

¹⁰¹ Bovon notes that this is “a third person rather than a member of the family of Jesus or one of his close disciples who took care of Jesus” (in addition to Simon of Cyrene and the “good thief”) (*Luke 19:28-24:53*, 3:331).

¹⁰² Simeon’s prophecy has come full circle: The Messiah has been a ‘sign to be contested’ and has caused the ‘rise and fall of many’, ‘so that the opinions of many hearts will be revealed’ (2:34–35).

John 19:38), but the details in the narrative are too few to be certain about this.¹⁰³

The audience should, however, evaluate him as a character of the disposition spoken of in Luke 8:15, and therefore at least a prospective disciple.

The final lines of Luke 23, speaking of certain women who followed Jesus from Galilee (23:55) and were preparing to care for his body (23:56), actually begin a new section that largely centres on the women, especially their response to the discovery of the empty tomb (23:55—24:12).¹⁰⁴ This section is the first of three final episodes in which the narrative moves the audience to consider what it will take for Jesus' followers to understand what has taken place. It is to the rhetoric of perception in these climactic episodes that the following exegetical section will attend.

3.5.3 Exegetical Analysis

Luke 24, in which the culmination of the theme of perception is clearly presented in the Third Gospel, largely revolves around how a central group of characters, the disciples (beyond just the eleven), come to finally recognise that Jesus has risen *and* that the Messiah's death and resurrection is 'written' in the Scriptures (24:44–47).

The narrative centres around three episodes which will be dealt with in turn below:

(1) the women's discovery of the empty tomb and the angelic message (24:1–12); (2) the Emmaus disciples' encounter with Jesus (24:13–35); and (3) Jesus' appearance to the gathered disciples (24:36–49).¹⁰⁵ Significantly, in each episode comes a statement of the *necessity* of the messianic suffering (24:7, 26, 46), which Dillon rightly takes to "...suggest that *Easter revelation is essentially the unlocking of the*

¹⁰³ Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 880.

¹⁰⁴ Dillon argues that Luke, condensing his Markan material, depicts the Sabbath as interrupting the plans of the women to embalm the body (23:56) in order to set up "single, progressive sequence at Jesus' tomb" as a "prelude to the great awakening of Easter faith" (*Eye-Witnesses*, 12–15).

¹⁰⁵ Also, near the beginning and end of the Emmaus episode Peter's encounter with the empty tomb—and then Jesus—is briefly featured (24:12, 34).

mystery of the messiah's passion, which his followers were prevented from understanding until this point.”¹⁰⁶

3.5.3.1 The Women at the Empty Tomb

The first episode is the discovery of the empty tomb by a group of women who had followed Jesus to Jerusalem from Galilee (23:55). Three of them are named in 24:10—Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James—besides ‘the others with them’. The first crucial detail comes in 24:4: after discovering the tomb *without* the body of Jesus inside, they were ‘perplexed’ or ‘at a loss’ (ἀπορεῖσθαι).¹⁰⁷ More specifically, it is ‘*while* they were perplexed concerning this’ (ἐν τῷ ἀπορεῖσθαι αὐτὰς περὶ τούτου) that two angelic men appear and address the very issue that perplexed them, first with a rhetorical question, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (24:5). This is followed immediately with the claim: “He is not here, but he has risen” (24:6). The presence of ‘two men’ (ἄνδρες δύο), rather than Mark’s ‘young man’ (νεανίσκον) (Mark 16:5), is plausibly explained by the author’s attempt to create a parallel with the transfiguration scene earlier narrated (Luke 9:28–36).¹⁰⁸ Recall from the discussion above that the dialogue between Jesus, Moses, and Elijah about Jesus’ departure (ἐξοδόν) which ‘[Jesus] was about to fulfil in Jerusalem’ (ἣν ἤμελλεν πληροῦν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ) (9:31) tied Jesus’ passion to the fulfilment of the Law and Prophets. Indeed, the necessity of the Messiah’s suffering, what was ‘hidden’ from the disciples in the context of the Transfiguration (esp. 9:45; cf. 9:32;

¹⁰⁶ Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 24 (emphasis original).

¹⁰⁷ Note that Mark (16:5) does not describe the reaction of the women *to the fact* of the empty tomb.

¹⁰⁸ Dillon offers a number of compelling verbal parallels, in addition to thematic ones that will be discussed below, including: (1) the visitation of heavenly figures designated by ἄνδρες δύο (cf. Acts 1:10); (2) descriptions of heavenly apparel; and (3) the hebraizing καὶ ἰδοὺ (*Eye-Witnesses*, 22–23).

18:34), is the heart of the women's confusion, the Emmaus disciples' slowness of heart (24:25–26), and the gathered disciples' fear, doubts, and amazement (24:36–43), leading to the climactic ending of 24:44–47, which will be examined just below. Notice, too, the role of rhetorical questions in these episodes in drawing the audience to consider possible objections to Luke's christological claim (24:5, 26, 38; cf. Acts 1:11).¹⁰⁹ Thus the two angelic men call the women to 'remember' Jesus' teaching in Galilee (24:6), the 'must' (δεῖ) of the Son of Man's suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection (24:7).

At the messengers' imperative to remember Jesus' earlier teaching about the necessity of his suffering and resurrection (24:6), the women 'remembered his words' (ἐμνήσθησαν τῶν ῥημάτων αὐτοῦ) (24:8). Is this an indication of their understanding of the centre of the narrative's christology—what has been hidden—that Jesus is the Messiah that must suffer according to the Scriptures? Green argues in the affirmative, noting the contrast between the women's 'miscalculation'—their assumption that Jesus' body would need embalming, implying they did not anticipate his resurrection—and the acts of remembering (24:8) *and* giving testimony of what had happened (24:10).¹¹⁰ However, the act of remembering need not carry 'the nuance of understanding or insight', as Green insists.¹¹¹ Dillon argues quite strongly the opposite, that the *Leidensgeheimnis* (or 'passion mystery') remains for the following reasons: (1) The women are 'perplexed' and the angelic address appears to be a rebuke (in contrast to Mark's much more positive announcement); (2) The

¹⁰⁹ The rhetorical function of these questions is helpfully examined in Deborah Thompson Prince, "'Why Do You Seek the Living among the Dead?': Rhetorical Questions in the Lukan Resurrection Narrative," *JBL* 135.1 (2016): 123–139.

¹¹⁰ Green, *Luke*, 838–39.

¹¹¹ Contra *ibid.*, 838; Otto Michel, "μυμνήσχομαι" *TDNT* 4:677.

women's testimony is simply a repetition of the τὰ ῥήματα which have previously been concealed (cf. 9:45; 18:34); (3) there is no explicit statement about their understanding; (4) other clues in the passage emphasise ongoing misunderstanding, including the unbelief of the women's report (24:11) and Peter's amazement (24:12); (5) a comparison with Saul's vision offers another example of a heavenly apparition that is not immediately understood (Acts 9:6, 17–18; 22:10–16); and (6) the use of 'Son of Man' rather than 'Messiah' (24:7) indicates that the mystery remains (cf. 24:26; 46).¹¹² Dillon also cites evidence from earlier in Luke in which an indication is given of a temporary concealment (e.g., Luke 17:20–21), as the earlier examination of this thesis showed in greater detail.¹¹³ Dillon maintains, therefore:

When the tomb sequence ends with the cover of the passion *mysterium* still intact, we understand that Lk has made his version of the *Messiahgeheimnis* [referring to Mark's 'messianic secret'] into an instrument of the literary counterpoint that is abuilding in the narrative: the tension between *Easter phenomena and Easter faith* that we have already begun to observe.¹¹⁴

While this is true, Dillon risks going too far to emphasise the extent of misunderstanding. Contrary to Dillon, the details of the narrative do not *preclude* understanding on the part of the women. This group of disciples *do* tell the apostles what they have seen (contrary to Mark 16:8!), and while there is not a clear indication of understanding, neither is there a clear indication of the opposite, and certainly not concealment (as in 24:16). On the other hand, contrary to Green, the remembrance and testimony of the women disciples from Galilee does not strongly indicate the 'new significance they attributed to Jesus' passion'.¹¹⁵ Thus a more moderate position should be taken: it is best to see the response of the women—

¹¹² Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 26–51.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 26.

¹¹⁵ Green, *Luke*, 839.

particularly the act of ‘remembering’ and ‘telling’—as an indication *at least* of the kind of limited understanding that Jesus’ disciples have exhibited throughout the narrative. Recall that these are disciples who have followed from Galilee¹¹⁶ and supported Jesus’ ministry (8:1–3).¹¹⁷ Yet, as Dillon points out, the tenor of Luke 24 is one of tension between the *facts* of Jesus’ recent suffering and the empty tomb and an *understanding* of the christological claim of the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s suffering. In fact, Jesus’ diagnosis of the Emmaus disciples is a key pattern of these final episodes: They are ‘slow in heart to believe’ (24:25). Whether the women at the tomb understand fully or not after their angelic encounter, theirs is a narrative that fits the general pattern of movement from confusion to eventual understanding.

It has already been mentioned that the women report ‘these things’ (presumably the discovery of the empty tomb, as well as the angelic message) to the ‘eleven and the others’ (24:9), also described as ‘the apostles’ (24:10). Significant is the reception of the report: “But these words appeared to them as nonsense (λῆρος), and they did not believe (ἠπίσταντο) them” (24:11). Misperception persists, though Peter emerges as somewhat exceptional as he is shown to be eager to get to the tomb and see for himself (24:12).¹¹⁸ His observation of the empty tomb and the grave

¹¹⁶ Dillon argues that Galilee, where the women were from (23:55; 24:6), symbolically represents an errant christology: “Miracle-enthusiasm is the christology of Galilee, and the disciple’s journey from it to the christological climax at Jerusalem is irreversible” (*Eye-Witnesses*, 38, 32–38). While I take the broader point that the “journey to Jerusalem” illustrates the hermeneutical journey of disciples, the redactional argument of Luke’s adaption of Mark’s “Galilee” cannot bear the weight Dillon places upon it.

¹¹⁷ As Green rightly point out (*Luke*, 839).

¹¹⁸ This verse is not found in some manuscripts, including Codex Bezae, and is sometimes thought to be an interpolation based on John 20:3–10. Its presence in P75, more primitive features than the Johannine parallel, and its coherence with Luke 24 weigh in its favour. See John Muddiman, “Note on Reading Luke 24:12,” *ETL* 48 (1972): 542–48; Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 888; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 157; Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 59–62. Note the present tense of βλέπει. Its verbal aspect indicates unfolding action and subtly heightens the drama of Peter’s discovery of the linen cloths.

clothes further establishes the credibility of the women's report and is perhaps the first step toward Peter's 'turning' to 'strengthen' the 'brothers' (22:32; cf. 24:34).¹¹⁹ But, not unlike the reaction of the women earlier, the audience is left with clues that Peter has yet to fully comprehend what he has seen. "He departs, marveling (*θαυμάζων*) at what happened" (24:12). This kind of marveling has occurred before in the narrative, often implying a misunderstanding of Jesus' identity or miracles (4:22; 8:25; 9:43). In Luke 24:41, which will be discussed below, disbelief and amazement are paralleled in describing the response of the disciples to Jesus' appearance. Further, the narration of Peter's arrival to, discovery of, departure from, and amazement about the tomb parallels that of women (24:1, 2–3, 4, 9).¹²⁰ The parallel is reinforced when the Emmaus disciples essentially repeat it in 24:22–24, where the crucial point of disbelief is captured in the phrases, 'they did not find his body' (24:23) and 'him they did not see' (24:24). As will be seen, even the sight of Jesus *alive* will not quite be enough to bring about faith (24:41).

So at the end of Luke 24:1–12, ten of 'the eleven' disciples, and likely the 'others' of 24:9, flatly *do not believe* the women's report. The female disciples who are 'perplexed' (24:5) but 'remember' (24:8) and Peter who 'marvels' (24:12) have similar experiences, but the narrative does not indicate explicit belief and understanding on the part of any. This delay of an explicit report of faith serves to create suspense and builds towards Jesus' own christological claim to his gathered disciples, rooted in the exposition of the Scriptures and aided with illumination (24:44–47).

¹¹⁹ Muddiman sees v. 12 as a vindication of the women's report, presumably from the perspective of the other disciples, for the audience hardly needs such affirmation ("Note on Reading Luke 24," 547).

¹²⁰ Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 66.

3.5.3.2 Emmaus

The second episode, unique in Luke among the Evangelists, describes two disciples, Cleopas (24:18) and an unnamed companion, travelling to Emmaus (24:13–35).¹²¹

Here Jesus appears for the first time since his burial and begins traveling with the two disciples (24:13–15). They do not realise it is the resurrected Jesus because, as the narrator says, “Their eyes were seized (ἐκρατοῦντο) so as not to recognise (ἐπιγινῶναι) him” (24:16). The passive ἐκρατοῦντο should be taken as implying divine agency in light of similar passages examined above (esp. Luke 8:10; 9:45; 10:21–24; 18:34; 19:42; cf. Acts 16:14) and the implication of a miraculous reversal (24:31).¹²² As has become clear, God is depicted as provident over the (mis)understanding of characters in the narrative, and a pattern of concealment of the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s suffering has become apparent.¹²³

On the remainder of the walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus, the two disciples report to this ‘stranger’ that Jesus, a mighty prophet, had just been crucified and his tomb was found empty by some women, as well as some others, who claimed to have been told by angels that he was alive (24:19–24). Jesus rebukes the two disciples, calling them ‘foolish ones’ and “...slow in heart to believe in all the things which the Prophets spoke” (24:25). Recall from the discussion of καρδία (above) that

¹²¹ Although familiar depictions of the two in Christian art envision two men, the unnamed disciple could well be a woman, perhaps Cleopas’ wife. The unnamed disciple is very unlikely Peter since the two Emmaus disciples appear differentiated from Peter by 24:24 and 24:34. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke (X-Xxiv)*, 2:1563; Bovon, *Luke 19:28-24:53*, 3:370.

¹²² Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 104; cf. Bogdan G. Bucur, “Blinded by Invisible Light: Revisiting the Emmaus Story (Luke 24,13-35),” *ETL* 90.4 (2014): 687; contra Green, *Luke*, 845 (Green typically avoids divine passives related to perception, as we have seen; cf. discussion of Luke 9:43–45 above); Tannehill allows for a divine passive, but wishes to diminish its force (*Narrative Unity*, 282).

¹²³ Dillon shows how the syntax of Luke 9:45 and 24:16 is parallel, increasing the likelihood that 24:16 echoes the earlier concealment (*Eye-Witnesses*, 146).

‘heart’ in Luke-Acts is used for the locale of belief and reflective thought.¹²⁴ Their slowness of heart has been illustrated vividly in the comedy of conversing with the risen Jesus about their disappointment that Jesus’ death has dashed their hopes (24:18–24). Jesus’ diagnosis of the problem emphasises their ‘slow’ belief *in the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s suffering* (24:26), again with a rhetorical question (cf. 24:5, 38).¹²⁵ The solution fittingly includes the exposition of the Scriptures by Jesus about ‘the things concerning himself’ (τὰ περί ἑαυτοῦ)—which must include the necessity of the messianic suffering (cf. 24:26)—‘beginning from Moses and from all the prophets’ (24:27). Still, no report is given of their faith or understanding, nor have they yet recognised this ‘stranger’.¹²⁶

Now approaching their destination, Jesus is persuaded by the two disciples to stay with them. They reclined for a meal, and Jesus, now assuming the role of host, broke the bread, blessed it, and distributed it (24:30). The meal setting and narrated actions in 24:30 echo two other episodes in the Gospel, the feeding of the 5,000 (9:15–16) and the Passover meal (22:15, 19).¹²⁷ Recall that Luke 9 teased out issues of what insiders and outsiders believe about Jesus. It is right after the miraculous feeding that Peter identifies Jesus as the Messiah of God (9:20), not long before the misunderstanding of the necessity of Jesus’ suffering due to divine concealment (9:45). Similarly, at the Passover meal, Jesus’ words about his suffering are soon lost in the disciples’ discussion about who might betray Jesus and which one was the greatest (22:14–34). Thus at the Emmaus table the audience is drawn to consider

¹²⁴ See discussion in the section on the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp (pp. 51–70).

¹²⁵ Prince, “Why Do You Seek the Living among the Dead?”

¹²⁶ Even though the audience might expect an indication of belief at this point (Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 293).

¹²⁷ As is commonly noted. See: Joshua W. Jipp, *Divine Visitations and Hospitality to Strangers in Luke-Acts: An Interpretation of the Malta Episode in Acts 28:1–10*, NovTSup 153 (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 201; Carroll, *Luke*, 487.

what the two disciples will make of Jesus' words: Will they understand? And will they recognise they are talking to the risen Christ?

After Jesus distributes the bread, the narrator explains: "Now their eyes were opened (διανοίχθησαν) and they recognised (ἐπέγνωσαν) him" (24:31), a dramatic reversal of 24:16. The opening of the eyes, implying divine agency once again (cf. 24:45; Acts 16:14), is presented as a *necessary* part of their recognition of Jesus.¹²⁸ Along these lines Dillon rightly observes, "...a purposeful schedule of concealment and disclosure, divinely appointed, coordinates the two stages of the Emmaus narrative."¹²⁹ Notice, however, that although the two disciples have recognised for the first time that the 'stranger' is Jesus, the narrator gives no clear indication of whether or not they have understood the scriptural exposition.

At this point Jesus disappears (24:31b), and the two disciples say to one another, "Were our hearts not burning within us as he was speaking to us on the road, as he opened to us the Scriptures?" (24:32).¹³⁰ Here, as elsewhere, the journey language coincides with the hermeneutical journey of characters in the narrative.¹³¹ Note that in Luke 24:31–32 the opening of eyes is connected with the opening of the Scriptures by the consecutive use of διανοίγω.¹³² Further, in 24:32, the exposition of

¹²⁸ Note that in Peter's preaching to Cornelius, he says that God 'granted that [Jesus] become visible' to his 'witnesses chosen beforehand' (Acts 10:40–41).

¹²⁹ *Eye-Witnesses*, 133 (italics original).

¹³⁰ In the next chapter, the parallels between this episode and the conversion of the Eunuch in Acts 8 will be considered. Morgan notes the role of the thoroughfare language in these contexts and others (*Encountering Images*, 96–97).

¹³¹ Recall that one of the primary conflicts in the plot has been the concealment of meaning from the disciples, which is explicitly mentioned near the beginning and end of the travel narrative (9:45; 18:34) (cf. *Eye-Witnesses*, 145); An in depth argument for the way the travel motif corresponds to spiritual transformation can be found in Morgan, *Encountering Images*; cf. Octavian D. Baban, *On the Road Encounters in Luke-Acts: Hellenistic Mimesis and Luke's Theology of the Way*, PBM (Paternoster, 2006).

¹³² As is often noted, e.g., Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation: The Gospel According to Luke* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1986), 282; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, SP (Collegeville, SC: Liturgical Press, 1991), 397, 399; Joel B.

the Scriptures is connected to an experience involving a faculty of perception, the burning of the heart: οὐχὶ ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν καιομένη...ὥς διήνοιγεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφάς (cf. 24:44–47).¹³³ In fact, it is the two disciples' recognition of Jesus *when their eyes are opened* that triggers the memory of their burning hearts and the *opening* of the Scriptures.¹³⁴

Does this memory of the burning hearts when Jesus expounded the Scriptures recounted by the two disciples indicate their belated understanding? As in the previous episode, the narrator offers no explicit indication. However, like the women earlier, the Emmaus disciples report these things to ‘the eleven’ and the others (24:33; cf. 24:9). They tell “...how he was made known to them at the breaking of the bread” (24:35b). The prepositional phrase “at the breaking of the bread” (ἐν τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου) is best understood as referring generally to the meal (i.e., ‘in the course of’).¹³⁵ Further, the passive form of ἐγνώσθη just prior (in 24:35b—ὥς ἐγνώσθη αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου) suggests that the recognition of Jesus was due to divine illumination, especially in view of the initial prevention of recognition (24:16) and the opening of the eyes (24:31).¹³⁶ Even so, some have attempted to

Green, “Learning Theological Interpretation from Luke,” in *Reading Luke: Interpretation, Reflection, Formation, Scripture & Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 70; Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 13–16.

¹³³ Cf. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 898. The variant reading of κεκαλυμμένη in Codex Bezae does not diminish this connection. For an account of how the theme of comprehension features in Codex Bezae, see Jenny Read-Heimerdinger and Josep Rius-Camps, “Emmaous or Oulammaous? Luke’s Use of the Jewish Scriptures in the Text of Luke 24 in Codex Bezae,” *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 27 (2002): 23–42, esp. 29–31; cf. Eldon Jay Epp, “The ‘Ignorance Motif’ in Acts and Antijudaic Tendencies in Codex Bezae,” *HTR* 55 (1962): 51–62.

¹³⁴ Note, too, that the narrative is not explicit about if or when the two on the road understood Jesus’ exposition of the Scriptures. Cf. Johnson, *Luke*, 399.

¹³⁵ As argued in Bernard P. Robinson, “The Place of the Emmaus Story in Luke-Acts,” *NTS* 30.4 (1984): 484.

¹³⁶ Using Second Temple traditions about glory, Bucur argues that the audience would understand the inability to see as a “fundamental incompatibility” between the glorified state of the resurrected Christ and the “not yet” glorified state of the two disciples (which would come via burning hearts and,

identify a more precise cause of illumination. These arguments are similar in that they correctly identify the basic strands of the secrecy or misunderstanding theme in the Third Gospel and proceed to connect its resolution to some repeated action in the narrative. For Crump, it is Jesus' prayer that is revelatory.¹³⁷ For De Long, it is Jesus' praise that brings illumination.¹³⁸ For Jipp it is the act of shared hospitality that removes their blindness.¹³⁹ In each case, the subject of the scholar's monograph—prayer, praise-responses, or hospitality—becomes the key to illumination at Emmaus.¹⁴⁰ Jipp is on the right track when he criticises Crump and De Long for unnecessarily reducing illumination to a specific action.¹⁴¹ However, Jipp's own insistence that the illumination was brought on by the 'ineffable hospitality experience' risks committing the same error of reduction.¹⁴² Something broader is in view, not necessarily exclusive of hospitality, prayer, or praise.

later, opened minds) (24:32, 45) (Bucur, "Blinded by Invisible Light," 681, 686). But throughout the narrative the concealment of understanding has featured in contexts where a glorified state is not in view.

¹³⁷ David Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts*, WUNT 2 49 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 98–108.

¹³⁸ Kindalee Pfremmer De Long, *Surprised by God: Praise Responses in the Narrative of Luke-Acts*, BZNW 166 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 243–44.

¹³⁹ Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 200–4; Robert J. Karris argues along much the same lines, seeing the Emmaus story as the "Gospel culmination" of the theme of "faith as sight" ("Luke 24:13–35," *Int* 41.1 [1987]: 57–61). It is incredible to me that Karris could claim this without considering the illumination scene of Luke 24:44ff.

¹⁴⁰ Of course, this fact does not lead to the conclusion that any or all of the three possibilities are wrong. However, it does suggest that the Emmaus narrative may not contain the details necessary to 'pin' the illumination on something specific aside from general divine agency.

¹⁴¹ Jipp, *Divine Visitations*, 202 n. 122.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 202. The following problems make Jipp's position difficult to accept: (1) it does not do justice to the importance of the exposition of Scripture, connected with the "burning hearts", as earlier discussed (cf. 24:44–47); (2) it overplays the connection of meals and the earlier revelation of Jesus' identity; (3) it does not carefully weigh passages related to perception where hospitality is not in view; (4) it assumes that the illumination effects more than the realisation of Jesus' identity (in spite of no such explicit indication in the narrative); and (5) it claims that hospitality "finally" resolves the narrative tension created by the theme of blindness, yet the Emmaus narrative only includes two disciples and doubts persist from 24:36, as will be shown momentarily; I would be more persuaded if in fact hospitality could be shown to be foregrounded in 24:41ff., such as is argued by Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 200–201 (see comments on 24:42–43 below).

If the Emmaus disciples do not *fully* understand, they are well on their way to understanding, and when they return to those gathered in Jerusalem, the audience learns that the others are well on their way, too. The Emmaus disciples find ‘the eleven and those with them’, saying, “The Lord has really risen and appeared to Simon” (24:34).¹⁴³ The mention of Peter provides a frame for the Emmaus episode with 24:12 and provides another example of a disciple’s journey from wonder *towards* understanding.¹⁴⁴ In 24:35, the Emmaus disciples tell of their recent experience to the others gathered. Thus the final note of the Emmaus episode is one of gathered disciples discussing at least two different experiences of the risen Jesus. However, their understanding is not yet complete, as will be shown in the final episode.¹⁴⁵

3.5.3.3 Final Exposition and Illumination (24:36–49)

It is almost comedic that in spite of what has transpired since the discovery of the empty tomb, not to mention Jesus’ teaching about himself earlier in the narrative, the disciples are presented as not yet understanding. In Luke 24:36, Jesus appears to the

¹⁴³ Iiaria Ramelli has recently brought renewed attention to the support of Codex Bezae’s reading (λέγοντες) in the Old Syriac and Coptic traditions. The nominative participle would depict the Emmaus disciples, not the gathered disciples, claiming the Lord has appeared to Simon (“The Emmaus Disciples and the Kerygma of the Resurrection (Lk 24,34): A Greek Variant and the Old Syriac, Coptic, and Latin Traditions,” *ZNW* 105.1 [2014]: 1–19); cf. Kirsopp Lake, *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (London; New York: Williams & Norgate; G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1907), 102; In spite of this evidence, the relatively weak external evidence and strong internal evidence suggest the variant is a transcriptional error (cf. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 899).

¹⁴⁴ This special appearance to Simon also marks him out as a leader in a way already anticipated (cf. 22:32).

¹⁴⁵ Contra Dillon, who wants to emphasise the hermeneutical significance of the presence of Jesus for his disciples’ understanding, insisting that the women do not understand but the Emmaus disciples do. (See discussion above and *Eye-Witnesses*, 155). It is better, however, to recognise that in both narratives, although the audience may well take cues that indicate some understanding on the part of the disciples, the narrative lacks any definitive statement of the kind. This is reinforced when, from 24:36, doubts persist. Dillon admits this is “contrary to our expectation”, but explains it as Luke’s desire to repeat the pattern of Jesus’ personal “summons out of confusion and blindness” (155). The key point is, and on this Dillon agrees (e.g., 168), that the narrative builds toward a clear and complete delineation of the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s suffering.

gathered disciples and greets them: “Peace to you” (cf. 1:79; 10:5).¹⁴⁶ Their response is one of terror and fear for they ‘were thinking they were seeing a spirit’ (24:37). Should not the disciples know better? Notice the narrator offers no distinction among those gathered, between those whom the audience may have thought knew better (e.g., the women, Peter, and the Emmaus disciples) and the others. Jesus responds by asking why they are ‘troubled’ (τεταραγμένοι) and why ‘doubts arise’ in their ‘hearts’ (διαλογισμοὶ ἀναβαίνουσιν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν) (24:38).¹⁴⁷ The language echoes Simeon’s prophetic words, that Jesus, the Messiah, would reveal the ‘opinions of many hearts’ (πολλῶν καρδιῶν διαλογισμοί) (2:35). Now the focus is on the διαλογισμοί of the disciples.

Jesus proceeds to offer evidence that he is not a spirit, offering to be touched (24:39) and showing his hands and feet to them (24:40).¹⁴⁸ Incredibly, the disciples still ‘disbelieved’ and ‘were marvelling’ (24:41), recalling their disbelief of the women’s report (with ἀπιστέω) (24:11) and Peter’s earlier amazement (with θαυμάζω) (24:12). To this, Jesus requests something to eat as if to offer further evidence of his corporeality (24:42–43).¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Of the textual issues in this verse, the one that gives pause is whether or not Jesus’ greeting was added (cf. John 20:19). However, on the basis of strong manuscript support, the greeting is treated here as belonging to the text of Luke (cf. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 901). In any case, its presence does not significantly impact the argument below.

¹⁴⁷ Jesus is aware of their thoughts here, an ability he demonstrates elsewhere in similar terms (5:22; 6:8). Note, again, the rhetorical questions of 24:5, 26, 38 (cf. Prince, “Why Do You Seek the Living among the Dead?”).

¹⁴⁸ Verse 40 could be a Western interpolation, but since its presence does not alter the sense of v. 39, further discussion will not be pursued here.

¹⁴⁹ Contra Dillon, who argues that the sense of ἐνώπιον in 24:43 indicates Jesus’ eating “at their table” or “as their guest,” emphasising restored fellowship (not Jesus’ corporeality). However, Dillon offers no compelling reason to reject what appears to be a far simpler reading, that is eating as part of the response to the original problem in 24:37 (i.e., the disciples thought Jesus was a “spirit”) (*Eye-Witnesses*, 200–201).

The narrative thus raises again a familiar question for the audience: What will it take for the disciples to understand?¹⁵⁰ The answer follows in what appears to be the climactic resolution of the conflict of concealment that has recurred throughout the Gospel. First, Jesus refers to his earlier teaching about how “...all the things written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (24:44; cf. 18:31–34; 24:6–7, 25–27). Then,

...he opened their mind to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, “Thus it stands written, that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day...” (Luke 24:45–46)

Notice how the illumination of 24:45 differs from the Emmaus scene: Whereas the Emmaus disciples’ eyes are opened *to recognise* Jesus, here the mind of the disciples—presumably *all* of those gathered in 24:33, including the Emmaus disciples and possibly the women (24:10)—is opened *to understand the Scriptures* (τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς).¹⁵¹

The purpose of Jesus’ ‘opening’ of the disciples’ mind is given by the articular infinitive, τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς: ‘in order to understand the Scriptures’ (24:45b).¹⁵² As has become clear, the scriptural necessity of Jesus’ messianic

¹⁵⁰ Green raises a similar question in light of these considerations: “Why are the disciples so slow to comprehend?” (Green, “Learning,” 69).

¹⁵¹ Matthew Bates has proposed an alternative understanding of the syntax in Luke 24:45, taking νοῦν (rather than γραφάς) as the direct object of the infinitive συνιέναι, effectively recasting Jesus’ action of illumination, the opening of the mind, with exposition, the opening of the Scriptures (“Closed-Minded Hermeneutics? A Proposed Alternative Translation for Luke 24:45,” *JBL* 129.3 [2010]: 537–57); While he is able to provide semantic support for his rendering of διανοίγω and νοῦς, his reconstruction is nearly impossible on syntactical grounds (for reasons he does not consider): (1) Rarely if ever in extant Greek literature does the direct object of an articular infinitive precede the article of that construction (i.e., direct objects of articular infinitives are not proleptic in this way); and (2) where the subject of the infinitive is unspecified, it is normally assumed from the subject of the main verb, thus the implied subject of the infinitive in Luke 24:45 should not be “the disciples” as Bates assumes. Further, his reading does not fit the context of Luke nearly as well as the traditional reading. For my full rebuttal, see Mann, “What Is Opened?”

¹⁵² The genitive articular infinitive could also indicate result, which makes little difference since in the context the resultant understanding of the disciples is implied by their worship in 24:52. Further, Jesus has been characterised in the narrative in such a way that the audience would not expect his purpose in 24:45 to be thwarted.

suffering is precisely what the disciples have not understood throughout the narrative of the Gospel to this point. Understanding is twice explicitly withheld from them in the wake of passion predictions (9:45; 18:34; cf. 19:42). This concealment of meaning was illustrated by the Emmaus disciples whose eyes were ‘seized so as not to recognise Jesus’ but later *opened* (διδασκαλῶ), enabling recognition and, as seen above, triggering the memory of their burning hearts at Jesus’ *exposition* (διδασκαλῶ) of the Scriptures (24:16; 31–32; cf. 24:25–27).¹⁵³ The same verb for illumination (διδασκαλῶ) is used in Acts 16:14, where ‘the Lord’ opens Lydia’s heart to receive Paul’s message (which the audience would assume includes a scriptural exposition) and in Acts 17:2–3, for Paul’s exposition of the Scriptures.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, both the context of Luke 24:45 and Acts 17:2–3 highlight a christological reading of the Scriptures that emphasises Jesus’ identification as the Christ and the necessity of his death and resurrection (cf. 24:7, 25–27).¹⁵⁵ The parallel language of Acts 16:14 also confirms a spiritual dimension to understanding (cf. Luke 8:10; 10:21–24).¹⁵⁶ To the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s suffering and resurrection in Luke 24:46 is added the scriptural mission of proclaiming repentance beginning from Jerusalem

¹⁵³ Indeed Luke often illustrates his theology, as Pervo notes: “One of the important contributions of literary analyses of Luke and Acts has been to indicate that the author communicates theological views by showing rather than telling, through story rather than through exposition” (Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009], 43).

¹⁵⁴ Note that in Luke 24:45, Jesus’ act of opening the disciples’ mind is closely associating with God’s earlier actions of concealing and revealing. Luke often associates Jesus closely with God in this way, as seen in his use of κύριος language (on which, see Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*). In Acts 16:14, it “the Lord” (κύριος) who opens Lydia’s heart.

¹⁵⁵ On the similarity of Luke’s “christological proof” and Greek (Aristotelian) rhetoric, see William S. Kurz, “Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Luke-Acts,” *CBQ* 42.2 (1980): 171–95.

¹⁵⁶ As Bovon says, “For Luke neither the message of the women returning from the empty tomb, nor the words of the disciples who have come back from Emmaus, nor the proofs of the resurrection were enough to provide a key to interpreting the holy Scriptures. That requires the spiritual intervention of the risen Christ, since it is a matter of the transformation of the ‘mind’ (νοῦς)” (*Luke 19:28–24:53*, 3:394–95).

(24:47).¹⁵⁷ The fulfilment of the mission must wait, as Jesus instructs, until the disciples receive power from the Spirit (24:49).

The final resolution of the disciples' misunderstanding, brought about by illumination (24:45), is *confirmed* in the Gospel's final scene.¹⁵⁸ It is here that the disciples worship Jesus and return to Jerusalem with 'great joy', continually 'praising God in the temple' (24:52–53).¹⁵⁹ Thus the Third Gospel ends on a note that could hardly be more positive, anticipating the future mission of the disciples now that they understand 'the events fulfilled among us' (Luke 1:1–4).

3.5.4 Synthesis

When Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, many of the conflicts seen throughout the narrative escalate. The religious leaders, dependably *unperceptive* in relation to Jesus' identity throughout the narrative, finally find a way to get Jesus: collusion with one of Jesus' own, Judas. One of Jesus' closest disciples, Peter, also features as disloyal in an incredible character reversal, claiming not to *know* Jesus thrice. Herod, whom the audience already knows as an outsider, wanting to see a sign from Jesus, gets confronted only with Jesus' silence. Although many characters during Jesus' trial and crucifixion respond negatively, the most perceptive character to appear is one of the criminals crucified next to Jesus. This criminal appears to demonstrate faith in

¹⁵⁷ One need not find a specific scriptural passage in view. The citation formula in 24:46 is not intended to recall a single passage but refers to the Scriptures broadly (cf. 24:44 which speaks in terms of the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms) (contra Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 84–86); cf. Mann, "(New) Exodus," 111–113; On the significance of the Psalms for Luke's christology, see Doble, "Luke 24.26, 44"; Peter Doble, "The Psalms in the New Testament," in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, ed. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, NTSI 1 (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004); cf. Joshua W. Jipp, "Luke's Scriptural Suffering Messiah: A Search for Precedent, a Search for Identity," *CBQ* 72.2 (2010): 255–274.

¹⁵⁸ Frein, "Misunderstanding," 345.

¹⁵⁹ The textual issues of 24:51–53 exemplified by the manuscript tradition do not greatly affect this conclusion since the key moment of understanding is assumed already in 24:45 (for discussion of issues, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 162–63). Further, the final note is a positive one on any of the various possibilities.

Jesus as the Messiah even amidst Jesus' *suffering*, the key christological concept at the heart of the disciples' earlier misunderstanding.

The spotlight returns to Jesus' followers in Luke 24 in the final three episodes of the Gospel. In each episode, a group of disciples moves from confusion toward understanding, and finally at the end, they reach their destination of complete understanding. First, a group of Jesus' female disciples are 'perplexed' after they discover the empty tomb, where they are reminded by angelic messengers of Jesus' earlier teaching about the necessity of his crucifixion and resurrection (24:1–7). These disciples then 'remembered' Jesus' words (24:8) and report what has happened to the rest of the disciples (24:9–10). The audience is left to wonder about the extent of the female disciples' understanding, however. Not so with most of the other disciples for the narrative is clear that they flatly do not believe the women's report (24:11). One possible exception is Peter, who goes to the tomb to see for himself and leaves 'marveling', an indication of something short of full faith (24:12).

Second, two disciples on their way to Emmaus encounter the risen Jesus, but their eyes are 'seized' by God so that they do not recognise him. Like the women disciples, the heart of their misunderstanding involves their surprise at the fact of the empty tomb and a failure to see Jesus alive (24:23–24). Jesus' diagnosis of the failure of the Emmaus disciples is the key to these final episodes: They are 'slow in heart to believe in all that the Prophets have spoken' (24:25). The Emmaus disciples' eyes are then 'opened' during the course of their meal enabling them to recognise Jesus, who then disappears (24:31). This triggers their recent memory of how their hearts 'burned' when Jesus 'opened' the Scriptures to them earlier (24:32). They

return to recount their experience to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem and also find that ‘the Lord’ has appeared to Simon (24:34–35).

Third, Jesus appears to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem (24:36). Yet doubts persist even after the empty tomb and angelic message seen and heard by some of Jesus’ followers (24:10, 11), after the two on the road to Emmaus told of their experience (24:33–35), and after Jesus himself appeared to them (24:34, 36, 37), offered to be touched (24:39), presented his hands and feet (24:40), and ate food before them (24:41).¹⁶⁰ The delay in any sure indication of understanding builds suspense and helps create the dramatic resolution at story’s end: Jesus ‘opens their mind to understand the Scriptures’ (24:45), specifically to understand the heart of earlier misunderstanding (9:45; 18:34), the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s death and resurrection (24:46). To this is added the future mission of the disciples and their commission (24:47–49), preparing the way for Luke’s second volume, Acts. The efficacy of Jesus’ illumination is confirmed when the disciples worship Jesus and return with ‘great joy’ and praise God continually in the temple (24:50–53).

Having examined the rhetoric of perception through the entire Gospel, the significance of Luke 24 for the entire narrative will be further summarised in the conclusion, below.

3.6 Conclusion

In chapter two, an examination of the first third of Luke’s Gospel indicated that the theme of perception appears from the beginning and is developed throughout. The

¹⁶⁰ Note the lingering doubts and misunderstanding spoken of in 24:37, 38, 41.

preface encourages the audience to consider how they might ‘recognise the certainty’ of what Luke narrates (1:1–4) just as characters in the story struggle to do the same. The key hermeneutical solution given in the narrative might be summarised with the imperative to ‘watch how you listen’ (8:18), in other words, to carefully listen to authoritative sources like the book’s author, Jesus, and Scripture—especially Scripture as expounded by trustworthy characters and the narrator. The narrative also emphasised God’s role in both concealing and granting knowledge (e.g., 8:10, 16; 9:45). Further, suspense was created by the juxtaposition of divine revelation to the disciples with the divine concealment that produced their misunderstanding (9:45). It was suggested that this is in part a rhetorical strategy for the author to communicate the centre of his christology, the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s suffering and resurrection. The repetition of misunderstanding also anticipates the culmination of the rhetoric of perception in Luke 24.

In this chapter, the rhetoric of perception has been traced from the beginning of the travel narrative (from 9:51) to the end of the Gospel. Luke 10:21–24 confirmed God’s role in concealing from the ‘wise and understanding’ the true significance of miracles and preaching that attest to Jesus’ identity. This passage also depicted Jesus as a mediator of the knowledge of God to men (10:22; cf. 24:45), and it reaffirmed the disciples’ place as insiders as Jesus praises God for his revelation to them (10:21; cf. 10:23–24). In spite of such revelation, however, the disciples once again misunderstand Jesus’ passion prediction when it is divinely concealed from them (18:34). The passion prediction of 18:31–33 makes explicit for the audience a central claim of the Gospel, that Jesus’ death and resurrection is written in the Scriptures. Ironically, just after the disciples’ misunderstanding, the story introduces

a blind beggar and Zacchaeus, both of whom cannot literally see Jesus but nevertheless prove to be positive models of perception, correctly perceiving key elements of his identity (18:35—19:10).¹⁶¹ Thus the audience is led again to wonder when or how the disciples will finally understand.

The conflict anticipated by Simeon (2:34–35) continues, centering mostly around the religious leaders' inability to perceive Jesus and their increasing desire to stop him. In the so-called 'triumphal entry' of Jesus, division is illustrated vividly: On the one hand is a crowd of disciples who identify Jesus as a king, and on the other hand are the Pharisees who rebuke them (19:37–40). This leads directly to Jesus' lament over Jerusalem's rejection of him. Jerusalem, where the audience knows Jesus will be killed, is condemned corporately with the language of obduracy familiar in the Scriptures: They have not recognised their 'visitation', and so God gives them over to blindness in the lead up to Jesus' passion (19:41–44).

Unsurprisingly, the conflict with the religious elite escalates when Jesus enters Jerusalem, but it also begins to more directly involve Jesus' own disciples. Judas betrays Jesus (22:3–6) and Peter thrice denies that he *knows* Jesus (22:54–62), creating suspense that helps set up the reversal of misunderstanding in Luke 24. Jesus' trial scenes give the audience further examples of how various religious and political leaders perceive Jesus. Notably, Jesus tells the Council that they 'will not believe' even if he tells them he is the Messiah (22:67–69), and Herod's desire to see a sign from Jesus is met with silence (23:9). Positive models of perception are few in the dark scenes of Jesus' passion, but one character stands out above the others. One of the criminals at Jesus' side affirms what was hidden from Jesus' disciples, the

¹⁶¹ Darr rightly notes how Luke uses secondary characters to develop the theme of perception (*On Character Building*, 56).

juxtaposition of Jesus' suffering and his identity as the Messiah (23:40–42). Luke further uses this positive character to affirm Jesus' innocence (cf. 23:47).

When attention returns to Jesus' disciples after his burial, suspense over what they understand about Jesus' death is maintained until near the very end of the story (Luke 24). In three episodes, a group of Jesus' followers encounters evidence of Jesus' resurrection and appear to move *toward* understanding. First, some of Jesus' female disciples are 'perplexed' about the empty tomb, but with an angelic reminder, they remember Jesus' earlier teaching about his death and resurrection (24:1–12). Second, the Emmaus disciples walk with Jesus, who interprets the Scriptures about himself to them, but due to divine intervention they do not recognise him until he breaks bread (24:13–35). Third, the group of gathered disciples, likely inclusive of both of the earlier groups, encounters the risen Jesus and appear to recognise him (24:36–43). In spite of Jesus' appearance, however, doubts and fears persist, suggesting to Luke's audience that the disciples have yet to fully understand.

In the Gospel's penultimate scene, the journey to understanding is completed when Jesus 'opens' the mind of the disciples 'to understand the Scriptures', particularly to understand the scriptural necessity of the Messiah's death and resurrection and the mission in his name (24:44–49). The necessity of the messianic suffering has been *the* fact previously concealed (9:45; 18:34), and it is a note hit in each of the three final episodes (24:7, 26, 46). That Jesus' act of illumination is effective is confirmed by the final scene, in which the disciples worship Jesus and return to Jerusalem with joy and praise (24:50–53).

The narrative reversal in Luke 24 confirms the expectation tentatively noted earlier, that the hiddenness of the kingdom is in one sense temporary, as implied in

the Parable of the Lamp (8:16–17) and further supported in Jesus’ explanation of the kingdom to the Pharisees and disciples, respectively (17:20–37). On this point, this thesis largely agrees with Dillon’s analysis:

The essence of the mystery which has covered the story since [Peter’s confession] is that *God’s messiah* (9:20) had to *suffer* (9:22). Between those two terms of the mystery was interposed the *krypsis*: μηδενὶ λέγειν τοῦτο (9:21), indicating that Jesus could not be known as *messiah* until his path *through suffering to glory* was complete.¹⁶²

For Luke, the temporary concealment was part of the divine δεῖ of Jesus’ passion and resurrection.¹⁶³ Note, however, two key divergences from Dillon’s analysis: (1) This thesis maintains that the ‘passion-mystery’ is prolonged *through* the entire Emmaus episode and much of the following episode, in which Jesus’ gathered disciples still do not fully understand; and (2) therefore, the key to the disciples’ understanding is not to be found primarily in the *presence* of Jesus, which the Emmaus disciples enjoyed, but more generally in the act of illumination that reverses the previous concealment and enabled an understanding of the Scriptures (24:45; cf. Acts 16:14).¹⁶⁴

The significance of illumination also need not be read *against* the significance of Jesus’ exposition of the Scriptures. For example, Bates, in fleshing out the theological implications of his syntactical proposal for Luke 24:45, implies that one must make a choice between possible ways of understanding, illumination

¹⁶² Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 140, cf. 41, 147 (emphasis original); similarly, Frein, “Misunderstanding,” 346–48.

¹⁶³ Briefly discussed in section 3.2.4 above.

¹⁶⁴ This conclusion need not completely exclude Jesus’ presence as a possible factor. However, in this case (and some others), Dillon’s conclusions appear too neat, tidying up loose ends that the narrative does not. For example, the sacramental theology that Dillon finds in Luke 24 seems to move on the text from the outside, rather than the other way around (cf. Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*, 41, 133, 140, 147).

or exposition, presented in the narrative.¹⁶⁵ He argues that the ‘important point’ for Luke is “...that someone...must serve as a *suitable guide* to the reader in order to explain the ‘meaning’ of the Scriptures.”¹⁶⁶ This is in fact an important point for Luke, but not to the exclusion of illumination. First, Luke gives examples of both illumination and exposition, as has been seen above. Second, the examples of suitable guides providing understanding in Acts cannot be read indiscriminately back into the Gospel as Bates does.¹⁶⁷ Even on a strong view of the unity of Luke-Acts, the theme of (mis)understanding functions differently in the narrative of Luke than it does in the book of Acts, as will be shown in the following chapters. Third, suitable guides sometimes *fail* to produce understanding in others, indicating that much more is at play than just suitable guidance in Luke-Acts. Recall Abraham’s word to the Rich Man: “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead” (Luke 16:31). Indeed, the penultimate note of Acts is one of fattened hearts and closed eyes in the face of Paul’s preaching (Acts 28:24–28).

So how does the rhetoric of perception in the Third Gospel enable the author to fulfil his purpose, to bring his audience to a recognition of the certainty of his narrative (Luke 1:4)? First, the rhetoric of perception becomes a major plot device through which the author communicates his theology, especially the central christological point, the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s passion and resurrection.¹⁶⁸ In so doing, the narrative encourages the audience to trust the implied author’s christological reading of the Scriptures, depicted primarily through the

¹⁶⁵ Bates, “Closed-Minded,” 556; cf. 538.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 556 (emphasis original).

¹⁶⁷ Attempting a theology of Luke-Acts (or any corpus) naturally focuses on similarities of passages, sections, books, etc., at the risk of neglecting distinguishing features of respective parts.

¹⁶⁸ Frein, “Misunderstanding,” 346–48.

narrator and trustworthy characters such as Jesus, Gabriel, and Simeon. Second, in agreement with Darr, the rhetoric of perception allows the author to present the audience with models of perception, both positive and negative.¹⁶⁹ By joining the hermeneutical journeys of characters in the narrative, the audience is led to consider true and false perceptions of Jesus' identity, quite clearly marking what the author considers orthodox, as well as the proper hermeneutical routes to be taken. One dimension of arriving at certainty is spiritual: God *grants* knowledge (Luke 8:10; 24:45). But the audience must also learn to listen (Luke 8:18), especially to Jesus (9:35) and the Scriptures (4:18–19; 24:25–26, 44–47). Third, by imitating positive models of perception, the audience is encouraged to be or become the ideal 'witness' implied in the narrative (1:1–4; 24:48), a point that will be further illustrated in Acts.¹⁷⁰

This leads to a related question: Is the concealment and revelation of God experienced by the disciples to be understood as normative in Luke-Acts? To put it differently: Does any and every person stand in need of illumination according to Luke? Briefly, the Third Gospel does not allow for a tidy answer. The theme of ignorance and illumination seems to be working on various levels. First, there is the scheme of divine concealment and disclosure experienced by Jesus' disciples. This revelatory 'schedule' seems to revolve around Jesus' death and resurrection, and insofar as that is the case, it is unlikely to be normative for Luke. In other words, the kind of concealment of the necessity of messianic suffering that occurs in Luke 9:45 and 18:34 should not be anticipated beyond Luke 24 (and, in fact, is not found in

¹⁶⁹ Darr, "Watch How You Listen," 87.

¹⁷⁰ Darr, *On Character Building*, 53–58; Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue (Luke 1:1–4)"; Kuhn, "Beginning". That correctly understanding Jesus, and more broadly, Luke's vision of God's redemptive plan, is a prerequisite to being a "witness" seems quite obvious.

Acts). On another level, however, is the notion of divine concealment associated with obduracy, whereby God gives (some of) his people over to blindness as judgment (discussed above, especially in relation to Luke 8:10; 10:21–24; 19:41–44). In Acts, this will come to the fore particularly at the end (28:23–28), in what is one of the most significant instances of the rhetoric of perception in the book. Recall that in Simeon’s prophetic words to Mary, Jesus was ‘appointed’ to be a ‘sign to be contested’, ‘revealing the opinions of many hearts’ (Luke 2:34–35). Luke thus presents God as provident over both the reception and rejection of his Messiah. However, there is also the revelatory action of God, whereby he (or Jesus) grants knowledge of God, salvation, the Scriptures, etc. (Luke 1:78–79; 8:10; 10:21–24; 24:45). In Acts, this is most clearly seen when the Lord ‘opens’ Lydia’s heart to receive Paul’s message (Acts 16:14). In sum, then, according to Luke: (1) God grants knowledge of salvation but his wayward people can be prevented (by their doing or God’s) from seeing it; and (2) In the case of Jesus’ disciples, in spite of special revelation, God temporarily concealed from them a key element of Jesus’ destiny, leading to misunderstanding that was reversed by Jesus’ illumination after his resurrection. Further discussion of these issues must wait until an examination of Acts, the subject of the next chapter.

4 The Rhetoric of Perception in Acts

At this point it should be clear that the rhetoric of perception helps shape the plot of the Third Gospel, developing a theme that connects with major conflicts experienced by characters and provides resolution to those conflicts in the narrative's climax (Luke 24:45). Given the relationship of the Third Gospel to the book of Acts, it must now be asked: Does the rhetoric of perception also play an important part in Luke's second volume?¹ The examination of select passages in Acts that follows suggests an affirmative answer. Compared to the Gospel of Luke, however, the book of Acts is subtler in its appropriation of the theme, and it does not contain the same scheme of concealment earlier observed in the disciples. Even so, the connection of Acts to the Third Gospel and the presence of the theme at key moments in the narrative of Acts—such as the opening of Lydia's heart (Acts 16:14) or the 'fattened' hearts of those who have closed their eyes at the narrative's end (Acts 28:24–28)—invite analysis. This chapter will be divided into two parts. First, the rhetoric of perception in Acts from its beginning until Paul's arrival in Rome will be surveyed (Acts 1:1—28:16), considering how the language of perception compares to that of the Third Gospel. The analysis of the first four chapters of Acts will establish the pattern of preaching and response encountered through much of the rest of the book. From here, having laid much of the groundwork for the language of perception, the analysis will be able to move forward more speedily than before, and it will examine the rhetoric of perception that revolves around certain characters in the story,

¹ The relationship between Luke and Acts is briefly discussed in the introduction.

especially Stephen, Philip, the Ethiopian Eunuch, Paul, and Lydia. As in the Third Gospel, it will be seen that the author favours the rhetoric of perception when depicting the divided responses to the gospel proclamation of the story's protagonists. More significantly, the language of obduracy seen earlier in Luke's Parable of the Sower will begin to be applied, anticipating the culmination of the rhetoric of perception in Acts 28:23–28, to which the second part of the chapter will be devoted.

4.1 A Survey of Perception Rhetoric in Acts 1:1 – 28:16

4.1.1 The Opening of Acts (Acts 1:1–11)

The opening of Acts contains at least three connections with the Gospel of Luke that are relevant to this study. First, the preface of Acts reintroduces the concept of 'knowing with certainty' first encountered in the preface of the Gospel (Luke 1:4).² Second, the beginning of Acts contains an overlap in material with and other verbal links to the Gospel, especially in Luke 24 where the theme of illumination is prominent. Third, the question asked by the apostles in Acts 1:6, along with Jesus' response, raises a question important for Luke-Acts: What and how do the apostles *know*? These three issues will be briefly discussed in turn.

The earlier examination of the preface of Luke showed that issues of *knowing* appear from the beginning of Luke's Gospel. Addressing Theophilus, Luke gives his purpose for writing, to 'recognise the certainty' concerning the things instructed (ἵνα ἐπιγινώσκῃς...τὴν ἀσφάλειαν) (Luke 1:4). Acts begins with another brief preface

² For the purposes of this thesis, it is unnecessary to determine precisely where the preface of Acts ends. For a helpful discussion of relevant issues, see Walton, "Where?"; cf. Keener, *Acts*, 1:641, 646–52.

addressed to Theophilus that recalls the previous treatise (Τὸν πρῶτον λόγον) and, as a result, its stated purpose.³ As Alexander notes, the syntactical ‘slippage’ in the first few verses and the loaded terminology suggest to any uninitiated reader that knowledge of the first volume is essential, and in fact assumed: “For the reader of Acts, in other words, the opening sentence makes it evident that the two volumes have to be read in sequence.”⁴ Therefore, in the examination of Acts below, an audience familiar with the rhetoric of perception in the Third Gospel will be assumed, and passages where perception is prominent should be read in light of similar passages in Luke’s Gospel.

Luke succinctly describes his first λόγον as about “...all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up...” (ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν ἄχρι ἧς ἡμέρας...ἀνελήμφθη) (Acts 1:1–2). This is congruent with the Isaiah 61:1 paradigm set out in Jesus’ ‘sermon’ at the beginning of his ministry (Luke 4:16–30; cf. 24:19): For Luke, Jesus *is* the Isaianic Servant anointed by the Spirit to do and teach, to heal and to preach good news.⁵ At the heart of his kingdom teaching is that previously mysterious proposition, the necessity of messianic suffering as a fulfilment of God’s redemptive plan revealed in the Scriptures (e.g., Luke 8:10; 24:44–49; cf. Acts 2:22–36).⁶ This is the teaching that was misunderstood by the disciples near the beginning and end of the travel narrative (Luke 9:45; 18:34), by

³ Strictly speaking, it is not necessarily the case that the purpose expressed in Luke 1:1–4 applies to Acts even if the author of Acts 1:1 is referring to the Third Gospel. As this section and the following sections will suggest, however, the purpose stated in Luke 1:1–4 fits the book of Acts so well that, on the basis of an accumulation of evidence, it seems more than reasonable to read it that way. Cf. Alexander, who is careful not to allow the prefaces of Luke and Acts to bear too much weight regarding the unity of Luke-Acts question: *Preface*, 145–46.

⁴ “Formal Elements,” 10–11 (quote from p. 11).

⁵ Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 1:652–53. Further, a key goal of Jesus’ ministry mentioned here was prominent in Luke 9 where Jesus speaks with Moses and Elijah about his “exodus” (9:31) and the narrator speaks of his “ascension” (9:51).

⁶ For a brief summary of this, see the conclusion of the previous chapter.

Jerusalem collectively at the end of the travel narrative (Luke 19:42, 44), and by most (if not all) of Jesus' disciples until the decisive illumination of Luke 24:45. The apostles will follow Jesus' pattern of ministry in Acts, healing and preaching the kingdom as Jesus' witnesses (Acts 1:8).⁷ They will also participate in God's work of illumination, as reflected in Paul's recollection of his commission from Jesus, "...to open their eyes, to turn from darkness unto light..." (Acts 26:18; cf. Luke 2:32). Thus in the preface, what Jesus 'began to do and to teach' (Acts 1:1), resumes the expectation of that ministry that Jesus 'fulfilled' in Luke 4:16–30 through the mission of the apostles.⁸

Following the preface, Acts 1:3–11 focuses on the period between Jesus' passion and his ascension, recapitulating the end of the Gospel's narrative (roughly Luke 24). Important for this study is the phrase ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις (Acts 1:3). The narrator proclaims, "...with *many proofs* Jesus presented himself alive to the apostles." The word τεκμήριον is used here, as in other ancient rhetorical contexts, as 'irrefutable proof'.⁹ These τεκμήρια are not specified but would reasonably include what the disciples experienced in Luke 24:36–43: the appearances of Jesus (cf. ὁπτάνομαι in Acts 1:3), the demonstration of his corporeality by presenting himself (cf. παρέστησεν ἑαυτὸν ζῶντα in Acts 1:3), offering to be touched, eating, and his

⁷ Cf. O'Toole, "Parallels"; Clark, *Parallel Lives*, 39–49, 63–73.

⁸ Dillon likewise notes the circularity: "Like the baptism of Jesus..., the Pentecost will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as power for mission and ministry; and in both cases the Spirit instills the power of prophecy...in its two essential phases so well known to us by now: mighty works and violent rejection!" (*Eye-Witnesses*, 219, emphasis original). More questionable is Dillon's support of this by linking Luke 9:51 (ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ) and Acts 2:1 (ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς πεντηκοστῆς); On Acts 1:1, what Jesus "began" (ἤρξατο) to do and teach might imply that Acts is about what Jesus continued to do and teach through his Spirit-empowered witnesses. See: F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, NLCNT (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1965), 32; Keener, *Acts*, 1:652.

⁹ For other relevant examples in Ancient Greek, see David L. Mealand, "The Phrase 'Many Proofs' in Acts 1,3 and in Hellenistic Writers," *ZNW* 80.1–2 (1989): 134–35; Keener, *Acts*, 1:666.

teaching (cf. λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ in Acts 1:3). Yet the emphasis in Luke 24, as shown earlier, is on the *slowness* of the disciples to comprehend *in spite of* such evidence. In Acts, little indication is given of that previous slowness to comprehend with the possible exception of the disciples' question in Acts 1:6, which will be examined in a moment. Rather, in line with the beginning of the Gospel, where Luke's purpose is to demonstrate the certainty of that which Theophilus has been instructed (Luke 1:4), Acts begins on a note of certainty: Jesus is alive and his witnesses have τεκμήρια. The narrative thus encourages the audience to pick up on what the disciples did not immediately in the aftermath of Jesus' crucifixion: Jesus was *surely* alive.

This raises one of the questions dealt with in the previous chapter: Why, if the disciple were given τεκμήρια, did they nevertheless fail to believe in Luke 24? Indeed, it is possible that the emphasis in Acts 1 of the sure evidence of Jesus' resurrection leaves behind the significant interplay of concealment and revelation in Luke 24. Acts, after all, is a distinct λόγον (Acts 1:1). Or, granting more coherence between Luke 24 and Acts 1, it may be that the appearances of Jesus are τεκμήρια *from the perspective of the illumined*, or those with eyes to see (cf. Luke 8:10–18). Indeed, these are not mutually exclusive options.

The last activity of the post-empty tomb, pre-ascension period mentioned in Acts 1:3 is Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God: λέγων τὰ περὶ τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ θεοῦ.¹⁰ In the book of Acts, the kingdom of God is closely associated with gospel proclamation and witness, and it is one of the notes on which Acts ends, creating a

¹⁰ As has been shown, in Luke this teaching is closely related to Jesus' identity, activity, and message, and it is the focus of both misunderstanding and illumined understanding (Luke 8:10; 17:20–37; 18:24; 19:11; 21:29–33; cf. 19:38, 42–44; Acts 1:6; 19:8; 28:23, 31).

frame for the book.¹¹ In Acts 28, Paul’s witness before a Jewish audience in Rome is depicted as follows: “...he explained by testifying solemnly about the kingdom of God...” (ἐξετίθετο διαμαρτυρόμενος τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ) (28:23). Soon after this, the book concludes with Paul “...preaching the kingdom of God and teaching things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered” (κηρύσσων τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διδάσκων τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ πάσης παρρησίας ἀκωλύτως) (28:31). Concerning τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ Peter says near the beginning of Acts: “Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified” (...κύριον καὶ χριστὸν...τοῦτον τὸν Ἰησοῦν) (Acts 2:36).¹² Thus the message of the kingdom of God, the gospel, which is the heart of the proclamation in Luke-Acts, is what the narrative depicts as the focus of Jesus’ teaching in his final days with the disciples. In light of the illumination of Luke 24:45, the audience should expect that the disciples were particularly perceptive of this teaching, reinforcing the trustworthiness of these central characters in Acts as they are readied by Jesus for Spirit-empowered ministry.

The teaching concerning the kingdom (Acts 1:3) and the mention of the baptism of the Spirit (1:5) leads the apostles to ask Jesus about the timing of the restoration of τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ (1:6). Does their question indicate misunderstanding? Pervo calls the question ‘excruciatingly inept’ in light of the fact

¹¹ On “kingdom” as an inclusio, see Lesław Daniel Chrupcala, “Il disegno di Dio e l’annuncio del regno alla luce di At 28,17-31,” *Liber annuus* 47 (1997): 79–96.

¹² Note that Peter speaks in Acts 2:36 of God making Jesus “Lord” and “Messiah” in Jesus’ ascension, whereas the summary statement of 28:31 appends those titles to Jesus’ name. For this reason, I have translated Χριστός as Christ in the latter example. For the possibility of understanding Χριστός as an honorific, particularly in messianic discourses of Paul and ancient Judaism, see, Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), esp. 64–97.

that the apostles had forty days of teaching on the subject.¹³ Turner's interpretation is nearly opposite:

The function of Lk. 24:44–46 and Acts 1:2–4 is to provide the reader with the assurance that the disciples fully understand the significance of the events which are about to take place, and so will be effective guarantors of the 'witness' which they are about to give. They thus have forty days of private tabletalk (1.4a) and instruction 'through the Spirit' (Acts 1.2), and the risen Jesus 'opens their minds' to all the Scriptures (Lk. 24.44–46). Their question in Acts 1.6, as we have seen, is thoroughly perceptive, not a misunderstanding.¹⁴

While Turner may go too far in claiming the disciples 'fully understand' in light of the way that Acts depicts a progressive revelation of the mission to the Gentiles (esp. Acts 9–11), his interpretation seems more in tune with the rhetoric of perception observed so far than Pervo's.¹⁵ Further, Luke does not narrate a well-defined sequence of events, e.g., forty days of teaching followed by a final 'question and answer' session in which the apostles fail. The narrative is much more ambiguous than that as Luke appears to attempt to roughly recapitulate the Gospel and launch into Acts.¹⁶ Even if the 'gathering' portrayed in Acts 1:6 was a sort of final gathering at the end of forty days, Jesus' answer to the question seems to indicate that in fact the apostles *should not know* the answer (discussed more fully below). Further, the question is a natural one for Luke's *audience* to ask, and may

¹³ Pervo, *Acts*, 41; James D. G. Dunn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Narrative Commentaries (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 9–10.

¹⁴ Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts*, JPTSUP 9 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 342.

¹⁵ For a summary of arguments on either side, see Jason Maston, "How Wrong Were the Disciples about the Kingdom? Thoughts on Acts 1:6," *ExpT* 126.4 (2015): 169–78.

¹⁶ For example, it is difficult to precisely match up the scenes of Luke 24 with a period of forty days in Acts 1. Luke 24 appears to narrate a *single* day (Luke 24:1, 13, 29, 33, 36, 50). Where, then, do the appearances, eating, teaching, and illumination of Luke 24 'fit' into the forty days? And the scene depicted in Acts 1:4—which itself exhibits imprecision in its shift from third person narration to first person direct speech—may or may not be the same scene depicted in Acts 1:6. Further, the ascension simply takes place 'after he said these things' (ταῦτα εἰπὼν) (Acts 1:9). If Acts 1:4 and 1:6 both depict a single teaching scene and συναλιζόμενος refers to a meal, then the apostles must travel to the place of ascension after the scene in 1:6–8. Thus the boundaries are too ambiguous to allow for the linear sequence presupposed by Pervo, for the narrative does not specify when this question was asked.

indicate more about what will soon happen in the story than the perception of the apostles. Thus Keener is probably right to call the apostles' question 'obvious' and Witherington correct to describe it as a 'natural question' in the context.¹⁷

In answering the apostles' question, Jesus says they are *not to know* the timing established by the Father (οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστὶν γινῶναι) (Acts 1:7). Recall that Jesus had answered previous questions about *precise* eschatological timing in a similarly cryptic manner (Luke 21:7–9; cf. Luke 17:22–37, esp. 17:37).¹⁸ Rather than encourage sign-seeking or specify the exact timing of the kingdom, Jesus has encouraged readiness. At the present moment in Acts, the instructions to the apostles include staying in Jerusalem until they are empowered for witness.¹⁹ Significant is the indication here that some knowledge *should not be obtained* by the apostles, particularly the timing of certain eschatological events. According to Luke-Acts, what they *must* understand is Jesus, his identity as Messiah, and the scriptural necessity of his death and resurrection—and to this they must be witnesses. For the audience, this may indicate that of the things they can be certain about (cf. Luke 1:4), eschatological timing is not one of them. This is an interesting suggestion if Luke's historical audience is dealing with questions about the parousia, a question that lies

¹⁷ Keener, *Acts*, 1:683; Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), 110; See also: Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 65.

¹⁸ On Luke 17:37, see the relevant discussion in the previous chapter. For a coherent interpretation of Luke 17:37 in its context, the problems of which I have highlighted in the previous discussion, see: Lang, "Reading Luke 17.22"; Lang, "Where the Body Is, There Also the Eagles Will Be Gathered."

¹⁹ Whether the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost is the restoration of the kingdom or at least an inauguration of restoration is not crucial to determine for the purpose of this study. In Luke, evidence was presented that indicated an expectation of a second return of Jesus (Luke 19:11–15; 23:42; cf. Acts 3:17–21), thus it would seem that Pentecost is perhaps the beginning of a restoration which will not be completed until the return of Jesus. In Acts 1:11, the angelic men speak of Jesus' return. Cf. Turner, *Power*, 267–315.

outside the method of this thesis but will be briefly entertained in the conclusion.²⁰

So the apostles' question in Acts 1:6 does not appear to indicate misunderstanding, and Jesus' answer indicates boundaries of knowledge that are drawn by God.

In sum, the opening of Acts recalls the author's purpose of bringing the audience to certainty (cf. Luke 1:4), as well as the essence of Jesus' ministry. Jesus spends some forty days with the apostles after his resurrection, giving them instruction that in the rest of Acts they appear to mostly, if not fully, understand. While the opening of Acts does not draw heavily on the theme of perception, the characterisation of the apostles is consistent with what is found in Luke 24: After illumination and exposition, they understand Jesus' identity as the Messiah and the scriptural necessity of his suffering. Their question in Acts 1:6 was seen to indicate understanding rather than misunderstanding, and Jesus' answer demonstrated that knowledge of the precise timing of eschatological events was not attainable (1:7). What is left for the apostles to do, then, is become witnesses of that which they now understand. That requires, as Jesus instructs them, empowerment from on high for which they must wait in Jerusalem, the subject of the next section. Thus Acts helps the audience anticipate the Messiah's witnesses continuing his ministry until he returns and consummates God's kingdom.

4.1.2 Perception at Pentecost (Luke 2:1–2:47)

At Pentecost, the apostles (and perhaps many others) receive the aforementioned empowerment (Acts 1:8), τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς, the Spirit.²¹ The result is

²⁰ Conzelmann famously argued that Luke was addressing the delay of the parousia (*Theology*); cf. Walter Schmithals, "Identitätskrise bei Lukas und anderswo?," in *Die Apostelgeschichte und die hellenistische Geschichtsschreibung: Festschrift für Eckhard Plümacher zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Cilliers Breytenbach and Jens Schröter, AGJU (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 223–51.

prophetic speech in the various languages of those festival pilgrims, who report: “We hear them speaking in our own tongues the mighty things of God” (ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ θεοῦ) (2:11).²² This astonishes the crowd (ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες καὶ διηπόρουν) (2:12a), leading them to ask one another, “What can this mean?” (τί θέλει τοῦτο εἶναι) (2:12b).²³

Peter addresses that question, explaining that, in keeping with the Scriptures,²⁴ they have witnessed the outpouring of the Spirit, evidence itself that Jesus has risen from the dead to the right hand of God since Jesus ‘poured out that which you see and hear’ (ἐξέχεεν τοῦτο ὃ ὑμεῖς καὶ βλέπετε καὶ ἀκούετε) (Acts 2:33).²⁵ The key moment most relevant to our study comes with the concluding imperative of Peter’s address: “Therefore, let all the house of Israel *know* for certain...” (ἀσφαλῶς οὖν γινωσκέτω πᾶς οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ) (Acts 2:36). Indeed, what the author wishes for his audience, that Theophilus might ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν (Luke 1:4), is what Peter exhorts his audience to do: to *know with certainty* that God has made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Messiah (Acts

²¹ The text of most manuscripts, reflected in the NA28, only specifies that ‘they were all’ (ἦσαν πάντες) in one place (or of one mind), possibly portraying a gathering of just the twelve apostles (cf. Acts 1:26; 2:14) or perhaps the 120 early mentioned (1:15). However, some manuscripts restrict the referent to the apostles. Although solving this problem is not crucial to the thesis, it seems that the πάντες in 2:1 and 2:5 fits a large group of 120 better than a small group of 12 (though see 1:14 for its use restricted to the apostles).

²² The Spirit thus appears to enable the speech but not the perception (contra Wilson, “Hearing the Word,” 18).

²³ Cf. BDAG s.v. “θέλω.”

²⁴ For the purposes of this thesis, it is not important to rehearse Peter’s (or Luke’s) use of the Scriptures in mounting his defence. For a summary of Luke’s use of the OT, see: Kenneth D. Litwak, “The Use of the Old Testament in Luke-Acts: Luke’s Scriptural Story of the ‘Things Accomplished among Us,’” in *Issues in Luke-Acts: Selected Essays*, Gorgias Handbooks 26 (Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2012), 147–69; cf. Mann, “(New) Exodus.”

²⁵ Kurz, “Hellenistic Rhetoric” argues that this is an Aristotelian enthymeme: the major premise is that Scriptural foretelling that the Christ would be resurrected without corruption; the minor premise is, “This Jesus God raised up”; and the conclusion, Acts 2:36: God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ (p 183).

2:36). The use of the two γνω- verbs with ἀσφαλής and ἀσφάλεια, respectively, is likely no accident.²⁶ Further, the final sentence of the speech also creates a frame with its first sentence: τοῦτο ὑμῖν γνωστὸν ἔστω καὶ ἐνωτίσασθε τὰ ῥήματά μου (“let this be *known* to you and pay attention to my words”) (Acts 2:14; cf. Luke 9:44; Acts 2:22; 4:10; 7:2; 13:16, 40; 15:13; 16:31; 22:1; 28:28). In the scope of Luke-Acts, the proposition that God has made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ is the heart of the λόγοι περὶ ᾧ κατηχήθης (Luke 1:4), the fact hidden before Jesus’ resurrection, earlier observed. It is now the centre of the apostolic preaching, that which would-be disciples must now understand. Peter’s audience must move from the observation (the *seeing* and *hearing* of 2:33) to *knowing with certainty* (2:36).

Peter’s audience asks the apostles, “What should we do?” (τί ποιήσωμεν) (2:37). He answers: “repent and be baptised” (Acts 2:38). Keener notes similar questions in Luke-Acts and their responses (Luke 3:10; 18:18; Acts 16:30) and concludes that these occurrences “...invest Peter’s call to repentance (Acts 2:38) with new meaning: true repentance produces a lifestyle of radical simplicity and care for others’ needs.”²⁷ While this ‘new meaning’ fits well in the scope of Lukan theology, it is questionable to import such an amalgamation of meaning into one and every occurrence. It seems better to look elsewhere in Acts. In 3:19 the repentance is, in part, repentance from acts of ‘ignorance’—there, the sins of abusing and killing Jesus (3:14–15). In 7:51, Stephen accuses his audience of a kind of wilful ignorance (with the analogy of uncircumcised *hearts* and *ears*, faculties of perception). Paul

²⁶ Nuttall, *Moment*, 13.

²⁷ Keener, *Acts*, 1:971.

connects repentance to ‘former times of ignorance’ in Acts 17:30.²⁸ Thus Green is right when he says, “Crucially, the primary obstacle that must be overcome [in Acts]... is ‘ignorance’.”²⁹

How does Peter’s audience respond? Upon hearing his message, the listeners are ‘pierced to the heart’ (κατενύγησαν τὴν καρδίαν) (Acts 2:37), a reference to the sharpness of remorse felt, likely in view of Peter’s sharp charges of their involvement with Jesus’ crucifixion (Acts 2:23, 36).³⁰ It is another example in Luke-Acts of how the faculties of perception, like the heart, mind, and eyes, are involved in characters’ understanding of Jesus, his identity, death, and resurrection.³¹ Whether the piercing of the heart indicates something beyond an emotional reaction, such as divine illumination, is not made explicit (cf. Luke 24:32; Acts 16:14). Elsewhere in Luke-Acts, those receptive of the ‘word’ are characterised as those with ‘noble hearts’ (cf. ἀφελότητι καρδίας in Acts 2:46), good soil on which the word falls, soil in which it will take root, grow, and reproduce (Luke 8:4–15). Indeed, many in Peter’s audience ‘receive his word’, are baptised and appear devoted (Acts 2:41–47).

²⁸ Note in this context, Paul is speaking to a pagan audience. The rhetoric of perception is present but subtle in that context: Those present ask if they ‘may know’ this new teaching (δυνάμεθα γινῶναι), calling it strange (ξενίζοντα) (Acts 17:19–20). In short, the answer to that question is ‘yes’. Paul goes on and speaks of God as the ‘unknown god’ (Ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ) they worship ‘in ignorance’ (ἀγνοοῦντες)—a God who now calls for repentance in light of imminent judgment by his appointed ‘man’ whom he raised from the dead, having overlooked former ‘times of ignorance’ (χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας) (17:23, 30–31). As usual, the response is divided (17:32–34), with some want to hear more, and others who believed (ἐπίστευσαν).

²⁹ Green, “Learning,” 71; For a fuller citation, see the introduction. As Green rightly notes, Taeger helpfully casts ignorance as a key anthropological problem in Luke-Acts: Taeger, *Der Mensch und sein Heil*.

³⁰ Similar responses can be found elsewhere in Luke-Acts (Luke 3:10; Acts 16:30; 22:10); cf. Joseph and Aseneth 6:1; BDAG, s.v. “κατανύσσομαι.” Note that the speech ends (or is interrupted) at the word ἐσταυρώσατε. Scholars often view Acts 2:37 as an interruption, but this is rightly questioned by Daniel Lynwood Smith (*The Rhetoric of Interruption: Speech-Making, Turn-Taking, and Rule-Breaking in Luke-Acts and Ancient Greek Narrative*, BZNW 193 [Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012], esp. 218–19; cf. Daniel Lynwood Smith, “Interrupted Speech in Luke-Acts,” *JBL* 134.1 [2015]: 177–91); For Acts 2:37 as interruption, see, e.g., Pervo, *Acts*, 84 n. 88; Keener, *Acts*, 1:970–71.

³¹ See also the earlier discussion of Luke’s use of ‘heart’ in the examination of the Parable of the Sower, as well as discussion of the Emmaus disciples, above.

Twice in the context this reception of the word by people is described in terms of ‘adding’ (προστίθῃμι) them, emphasising divine involvement (2:41, 47; cf. 5:14; 11:24). The first description of adding is a divine passive, as is strongly suggested by the second where ὁ κύριος is the subject of προστίθῃμι (Acts 2:47). Further in 2:47, those added are described as τοὺς σφζομένους, i.e., those who are heeding Peter’s exhortation(s): σώθητε ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς σκολιᾶς ταύτης (Acts 2:40), itself echoing his citation of the prophet Joel just earlier (Acts 2:21). Thus those responding positively to Peter’s message are described in ways that align with the imperative of Luke 8:18, to listen carefully, and their positive responses are depicted as within God’s purview.

To summarise Peter’s first speech, then, visible and audible manifestations of the Spirit at Pentecost are supporting evidence that Jesus has poured out the Spirit from his position at the right hand of God, having been raised from the dead to sit on the throne of David as was prophesied in Scripture.³² Indeed, that God made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Christ is what Israel must understand (Acts 2:36). By implication, it is also what Luke’s audience must be certain of (Luke 1:4). Peter’s audience—or at least many of them—do understand, experiencing pierced hearts and responding in repentance. They become, then, positive models of perception for the audience.

4.1.3 Peter’s Second Speech (Acts 3:11–26)

What takes place during and after Peter’s first Pentecost speech becomes a pattern repeated in Acts: proclamation of the good news is followed by a response, including

³² Peter’s speech especially relies on a christological reading of the Psalms. On the significance of the Psalms in Luke’s christology, see Doble, “Luke 24.26, 44”; Doble, “The Psalms in the New Testament”; cf. Jipp, “Luke’s Scriptural Suffering Messiah.”

hearers who repent and receive the Spirit but also those who reject the message.³³

The overwhelmingly positive response of Peter's Jewish audience will lessen in degree as conflict increases throughout Acts.

Peter's second speech in Acts is also set on the day of Pentecost, a fact that is sometimes lost since the first speech is more closely associated with 'Pentecost'.³⁴

The descent of the Spirit and first speech occur around the third hour, mid-morning (Acts 2:15). The second speech begins around the ninth hour (3:1) or mid-afternoon, as Peter and John enter the temple (as far as Solomon's Portico) (3:11) to pray.

Around evening (ἑσπέρα) (4:3) of that day, Peter (and presumably John) are *still* talking with the people (4:1), at which time the authorities throw them into jail to hold them for interrogation the following day (4:3). The important takeaway in this narrative sequence for this thesis is to note the proximity of the setting of the two speeches, especially in light of their thematic similarities: both are provoked by the crowd's 'amazement' about some manifestation of God's power (2:12; 3:10–11).

The manifestation itself is supporting evidence of Jesus' messianic identity and both speeches contain strong accusations against the audience for involvement in Jesus' crucifixion (esp. 2:23, 36; 3:13–15, 17; cf. 4:10–11; 5:30–31). Further, central to both are arguments for the scriptural necessity of the Messiah's suffering, evidence for Jesus' resurrection,³⁵ and the identification of Jesus as the Messiah (esp. 2:36;

³³ On speeches in Acts, see Keener, *Acts*, 1:258–319. Keener notes that Luke reports the response—acceptance or rejection—after each “evangelistic sermon” (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:33; 7:54; 8:6, 36; 10:44; 13:44, 48–50; 17:32; 22:22; 28:24, 29).

³⁴ For example, Parsons emphasises how the “...section is clearly set off from the rest of Acts by narrative summaries on either side (2:41–47; 4:32–37)” (Mikeal C. Parsons, *Acts*, Paideia [Baker Academic, 2008], 54).

³⁵ Namely, eyewitness testimony (2:32; 3:15). In the first speech, the necessity of Messiah's resurrection is also defended explicitly from scriptural citations.

3:20). Note, too, Peter's similar addressees: ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἱερουσαλὴμ πάντες (2:14) and ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται (3:12).

For the purposes of this thesis, it is unnecessary to examine the details of the entire speech. Note, then, verse 17 where Peter, referring to the audience's involvement in Jesus' crucifixion once again, says that they (i.e., ἀδελφοί) and their rulers (οἱ ἄρχοντες) acted 'in ignorance' (κατὰ ἄγνοιαν). Ignorance here does not diminish guilt: the audience is culpable and must repent, according to Peter (3:19).³⁶ Even though they are guilty of Jesus' death, they *unwittingly* fulfilled God's plan for the Messiah to suffer as spoken by 'all the prophets', as 3:18 suggests (cf. 4:27–28).³⁷ They did not *understand*, but misunderstanding is not outside of God's providence, as the narrative has made clear. God has even been quite directly involved in characters' understanding, and culpability for misunderstanding remains in spite of divine intervention (esp. Luke 8:10; 9:45; 18:34; 24:45). Peter thus calls for repentance 'so that your sins may be wiped out' (Acts 3:19).

Recall Green's observation, cited above, that repentance involves overcoming ignorance, especially of God's purposes.³⁸ While this is true, Peter's second speech also suggests that ignorance led to certain concrete deeds from which the audience must repent. Repentance in the context is from τὰς ἁμαρτίας (3:19) which surely refers primarily to specific deeds (in fact done κατὰ ἄγνοιαν) related to the suffering of the Messiah (esp. 3:13–15). Ignorance and misunderstanding *are* central to the

³⁶ Parsons, offering a helpful suggestion that (Luke's) Peter is using a rhetorical strategy called synkrisis, in which one party is blamed and the other praised, rightly concludes: "Ignorance is no excuse for their actions" (Parsons, *Acts*, 61). The guilt of the audience is further assumed by the solemn warnings in 3:23 that those who do not heed the prophet, who is implied to be Jesus here, will be cut off from the people.

³⁷ Note the contrast depicted: ὁ δὲ θεός.

³⁸ Green, "Learning," 71; Green, *Conversion*, 91–99.

plot of Luke and Acts, as has become clear. But heretofore in the narrative repentance has been presented as the proper response to kingdom preaching, not the *means* of overcoming ignorance. That is, repentance accompanies—perhaps is a result of—‘enlightenment’ (or an understanding of the proclamation, the centre of which is the proposition that the crucified Jesus is God’s Messiah, the one whose suffering the Prophets foretold). In Acts 17, where God is said to ‘overlook times of ignorance’, the implication is not that ignorance is excusable, but that deeds done out of ignorance will be judged ‘on that day’, thus demanding repentance ‘now’.³⁹ The final line of Peter’s speech emphasises repentance, and that it was for the Jews, first, that God *raised up* His Servant (cf. Deut 18:15, 18) to *bless* the people (cf. Gen 22:18).⁴⁰ How would God’s servant bless them?—‘by turning (ἐν τῷ ἀποστρέφειν) each from your sins’ (3:26). Repentance is, after all, part of the message Jesus preached and what the Scriptures foretold in reference to the salvation brought by the Messiah (cf. Luke 24:46–47).

One other aspect of the speech merits comment. Note the emphasis on ‘heeding’ the prophet, especially from the Deuteronomy citation. Peter is supporting his argument (μέν), both his case for Jesus’ identification as the Messiah and the call for repentance, by implying that Jesus *is* the prophet-like-Moses who must be heeded: αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε κατὰ πάντα ὅσα ἂν λαλήσῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς (3:22b). Verse 23, a probable allusion to Leviticus 23:29, reiterates the need to *heed* with ἀκούω. It should be clear that this word has been central to the rhetoric of perception, perhaps most notably in the context of the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp, where four different

³⁹ Thus I find the notion of “mitigated ignorance” problematic (contra Eubank, “A Disconcerting Prayer”).

⁴⁰ Cf. Acts 3:22/Deut 18:15, 18 and God ‘raising’ a Prophet-like-Moses, and Acts 3:25/Gen 22:18 and God ‘blessing’ all the families of the earth through Abraham’s seed.

kinds of ‘hearing’ or ‘receiving’ the word are illustrated (Luke 8:12, 13, 14, 15), leading to the culminating imperative to ‘listen’ (Luke 8:18). The importance of listening is reaffirmed throughout Acts, as will become clearer below.⁴¹ The proper response to deeds done in ignorance, then, is repentance from those deeds, as well as a *hearing* (i.e., understanding) of the message of the Prophet-like-Moses, the Messiah Jesus whom Peter’s audience—as he reminds them—has crucified. How did Peter’s audience respond to his second speech? The narrative says πολλοὶ δὲ τῶν ἀκουσάντων τὸν λόγον ἐπίστευσαν (“And many of those who heard the Word believed”) (4:4).⁴² Their hearing was understanding.

Significantly, those failing to heed the prophet ‘will be cut off from among the people’ (ἐξολεθρευθήσεται ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ) (3:23; cf. Lev 23:29). This likely implies, in the scope of Luke’s theology, that those Jews in the audience who do not repent in faith will be cut off from God’s people, Israel.⁴³ The ramifications of this view will receive further attention in the second part of this chapter. For now, it is sufficient to note the connection between obduracy and the divided people of God observed in previous chapters of this thesis, particularly in examining Simeon’s prophecy (Luke 2:34–35) and the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp (esp. 8:10, 18). Peter’s second speech in Acts makes explicit an issue of division among the people, hinted at already in the mixed response of those witnessing the initial manifestation of the

⁴¹ Wilson, “Hearing the Word,” esp. 18–20.

⁴² Note, too, Acts 4:32–35, like 2:42–47, summarises the community of believers, though in chapter four the focus is on their unity and sharing as a lead in to the Ananias and Sapphira story. The metaphor for unity—*καρδία καὶ ψυχὴ μία* (4:32; cf. 2:46)—is intriguing as elsewhere *καρδία* features in connection with illumination (Luke 8:15; 24:25, 32, 38; Acts 16:14; 28:27). Here, however, the connection is not clear. A full account of the ways in which Luke uses *καρδία* will be taken up in the discussion of Lydia’s opened heart (Acts 16:14) below.

⁴³ Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 41–74; cf. Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: 3:1–14:28*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 1116–17; Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, trans. Bernard Noble, Gerald Shinn, and R. McL. Wilson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971), 209.

Holy Spirit (Acts 2:12–13, 41).⁴⁴ Conflict with the Jewish leaders, especially in Jerusalem, begins from Acts 4:1. Later, ‘Jews from Asia’ (21:17) become Paul’s primary antagonists (esp. those who rejected him at Pisidian Antioch and Iconium) (13:45–47, 50; 14:2, 4–5, 19; 20:18–19; cf. 17:5, 13; 18:12–13; 21:11, 27, 27; 22:22–23, 30; 23:12, 14–15; 24:27; 25:2–3, 7). The problem of a divided Israel comes to the fore at a few points throughout Acts, culminating near the end when a group of Jews in Rome are divided in response to Paul’s message (esp. Acts 28:24). There, an explicit connection is made between the divided response of the Jewish people and the rhetoric of perception.⁴⁵

The division following Peter’s second speech occurs from Acts 4:1. The religious rulers, described earlier as acting ‘in ignorance’ regarding Jesus’ crucifixion (3:17), throw Peter and John in jail for preaching Jesus’ resurrection (4:1–3). Peter addresses these ἄρχοντες τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ πρεσβύτεροι (4:8)—who include τοὺς γραμματεῖς (4:5) and Ἄννας ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ Καϊάφας καὶ Ἰωάννης καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ ὅσοι ἦσαν ἐκ γένους ἀρχιερατικοῦ (4:6)—with a defense, in which he essentially preaches the gospel (4:10–12). Note that in the Gospel of Luke, the religious elite were those who antagonised Jesus and were instrumental in his death. Indeed, the language of their gathering against Peter and the characters involved are similar to those who gathered against Jesus, as recounted in the context (4:27). As a result of these parallels, the narrative suggests that the rulers who bear the guilt for killing God’s Messiah are unrepentant, doing the same deeds of ignorance against the Messiah’s witnesses (cf. 3:17). Thus they have not heeded the Prophet-like-Moses and are at risk of being cut off from the people. It would be premature at this point to

⁴⁴ Pervo, *Acts*, 110.

⁴⁵ For a full discussion, see the second part of this chapter.

say that they (or others) will not repent. Indeed, this thread is not tied until Acts 28, if at all. In any case, the rulers release Peter and John with a warning to stop preaching. Ironically, to the rulers who have *heard* but not *heeded* the gospel, seen but not understood, Peter and John respond by juxtaposing *heeding* the rulers against *heeding* God, using ἀκούω (ὕμῶν ἀκούειν μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ θεοῦ) (3:19), concluding that they are unable to stop speaking about what they have *seen* and *heard* (ἃ εἶδαμεν καὶ ἠκούσαμεν) (3:20). This is the nature of their witness, the result of Spirit-empowered witness (4:8, 31, 33; cf. 1:6–8).

One final observation must be made of the aftermath of Peter’s second Pentecost speech. The corporate prayer of the gathered believers, described simply as Peter and John’s ‘own’ (τοὺς ἰδίους) (4:23), sets Jesus’ suffering in light of Psalm 2:1–2 and emphasises God’s intricate providence over Jesus’ death (esp. 4:27–28). In the logic of the prayer, recalling God’s providence in Jesus’ suffering serves as a basis for requesting similar divine intervention on behalf of those witnessing in Jesus’ name. But in the larger narrative, Acts 4:27–28 expands 2:23: Not only is Jesus’ betrayal (ἔκδοτος) according to God’s predetermined plan (τῇ ὠρισμένη βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ) (2:23), but the specific actions of Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles, and the peoples of Israel are described thus: ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἡ χεὶρ σου καὶ ἡ βουλή σου προώρισεν γενέσθαι (“to do whatever your hand and your will determined beforehand to be”) (4:28).⁴⁶ In the speech that led to this moment, Peter emphasised that such actions done κατὰ ἄγνοιαν were part of God’s plan as foretold in the Scriptures (3:17–18). For the audience, then, the narrative reaffirms God’s

⁴⁶ Cf. Cadbury, *Making*, 304–5 (see also the quotation in the introductory chapter, above).

orchestration of the events surrounding Jesus' messianic suffering, providence that nevertheless maintains the culpability of guilty parties who must repent.

In sum, Peter's second speech repeats many of the central ideas of his first.

What, therefore, is its significance? Pervo's observation confirms the analysis above:

The speech provides a basis for the advancement of the plot. Opposition now erupts, not from the people but from officials and Sadducees. ... The contrast between the promise of 2:39 and the threat of 3:23 will be, in retrospect, a foreshadowing of the ultimate Jewish reaction to the message. Acts 3 illuminates chap. 2 by contrast.⁴⁷

Thus the audience has a sense of how the rest of the story will unfold: the Messiah's witnesses will faithfully proclaim the good news, the centre of which is the identification of Jesus as the Messiah, the scriptural necessity of his death and resurrection, and the call to repentance.

4.1.4 Stephen's Speech (Acts 6:8—7:60)

Opposition from among the Jews escalates in the context of what is the longest speech in Acts. The rhetoric of perception is found throughout it, but it is especially prominent at the end. Stephen's speech, which is a defense of false charges brought against him, is addressed to the Council in Jerusalem and the others who gathered, presumably including his accusers who were largely from synagogues outside Jerusalem (Acts 6:11–15; 7:1).⁴⁸ Agreement concerning the speech's main themes and its interpretation for the rest of Acts has eluded scholars for some time.⁴⁹

However, an important element that comes to the fore at the end of the speech is

⁴⁷ Pervo, *Acts*, 110.

⁴⁸ Note the textual issues of Acts 6:9 make identifying the provenance of Stephen's accusers slightly more difficult, but however the issues are resolved, the opponents appear to be from outside Jerusalem. See discussion in *ibid.*, 166–67.

⁴⁹ David Seccombe, "The New People of God," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 349–72; Johannes Bihler, *Die Stephanusgeschichte im Zusammenhang der Apostelgeschichte.*, Münchener theologische Studien 1 (München: M. Hueber, 1963).

apparent enough, namely the accusation that throughout Israel's history its leaders have rejected and murdered God's prophets, including Jesus, whom Stephen calls the 'righteous one' (7:51–52; cf. 22:14).⁵⁰ What is more, Stephen accuses his judges of hypocrisy: they have not kept their own law.⁵¹

The rhetoric of perception frames Stephen's speech. When he begins, he addresses the ἄνδρες ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατέρες and calls for them to *listen*, to understand (ἀκούσατε) (Acts 7:2; cf. Luke 9:44; Acts 2:14, 22; 4:10; 7:2; 13:16, 40; 15:13; 16:31; 22:1; 28:28). Near the end, when the speech takes a dramatic turn, Stephen accuses his audience of wilful ignorance using the language of 'stiff-necks' familiar in Exodus and Deuteronomy,⁵² and the analogy of uncircumcised *hearts* and *ears* (ἀπερίτμητοι καρδίαις καὶ τοῖς ὠσίν) familiar in the Prophets (Jer 6:10; 9:26; Ezek 44:9) (Acts 7:51).⁵³ This recalls the moral dimension of the faculties of perception once again (cf. Luke 8:15).⁵⁴ Stephen's audience, like their 'fathers' who persecuted Israel's prophets and Jesus himself, are deficient in *heart*, unable to perceive. Recall how Jesus warned the Council, the same organisation of Jerusalem's religious leaders trying Stephen, that if he were to tell them that he was the Messiah, they would not *believe* him (Luke 22:67–68). Similarly, Abraham told the rich man that the rich man's relatives will not be persuaded by a resurrected Lazarus if they do not *listen* to Moses and the Prophets (Luke 16:31). The importance of hearing Scripture aright was also seen in Jesus' Nazareth 'sermon', after which his audience ultimately

⁵⁰ I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980), 131–32; Pervo, *Acts*, 192.

⁵¹ Pervo, *Acts*, 192.

⁵² Cf. σκληροτράχηλος in Exod 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut 9:6, 13.

⁵³ Wilson also observes the language of hearing at the beginning and end of the speech (Wilson, "Hearing the Word," 13). Wilson likewise observes other occurrences of speaking, listening, and sight in Stephen's speech, sometimes overestimating its significance (particularly where the language of hearing and speaking is part of typical narrative discourse).

⁵⁴ See discussion of the Parable of the Sower in chapter 2, above.

rejected their hometown prophet (Luke 4:16–30). Thus Simeon’s warning to Jesus’ mother is still inescapable: the Messiah is appointed for the ‘rise and fall’ of many in Israel, a ‘sign to be contested’ (Luke 2:34–35), and his witnesses are encountering the same conflict.

The response of Stephen’s audience confirms his accusation about their inability to perceive: They kill him, yet another prophet (7:54–60). Again, the language of perception is prominent. Unlike the hearts of the Emmaus disciples that burned when Jesus opens the Scriptures (Luke 24:32) or Peter’s audience that was ‘pierced to the heart’ and repented in Acts 2:37 (cf. 2:46), Stephen’s listeners, upon hearing him (Ἀκούοντες), become ‘cut through to the heart’ (διεπρίοντο ταῖς καρδίαις), that is *enraged*, gnashing their teeth (Acts 7:54).⁵⁵ Note the contrasts drawn between Stephen and his audience in the context: (1) the audience resists the Holy Spirit (7:51) whereas Stephen is full of the Spirit (7:55); (2) the audience’s misperception leads to their rejection of God’s prophets even as they reject God’s witness, Stephen (7:51–72); (3) Stephen is able to ‘gaze’ into heaven and *see* the Son of Man at God’s right hand (7:56); (4) when Stephen cries out with a great voice (κράξαντες δὲ φωνῇ μεγάλῃ) describing his vision, his audience closes their ears (συνέσχον τὰ ὦτα αὐτῶν) and rushes at him (7:57).⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Cf. Keener, *Acts*, 2:1435: “Their ‘uncircumcised’ hearts (7:51) are now pierced.”

⁵⁶ The contrasts between Stephen and his audience are often noted and are helpfully brought together in Wilson, “Hearing the Word,” 13–14. Wilson also observes a frame with ὁράω and ἀτενίζω (Acts 6:15; 7:55). However, I am less confident about the significance that Wilson draws out of this: “Stephen, then, may be the passive object of sight prior to his speech, but he also actively exercises his sight after his speech” (10). One of Wilson’s concerns in the article is to relate and distinguish between sight and audition in Luke-Acts. She finds evidence that “Luke depicts seeing in terms of agency” and “hearing in terms of receptivity” (20). This strikes me as a strange dichotomy given the rhetoric of perception in Luke-Acts, where seeing and hearing are often used as metaphors for perception that imply the agency of the observer (even when depicted in terms of receptivity as in Luke 9:44).

In sum, in Stephen’s speech and its context, the characterisation of religious leaders as unperceptive is dramatically reaffirmed as those that killed Jesus, according to Luke, also kill Stephen.⁵⁷ The concept of the circumcision of the ‘ears’ and ‘heart’ also reintroduces the importance of one’s character for understanding, as in the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:15; cf. 11:33–36). Finally, the subject of the obduracy of Israel—recounted in Stephen’s account of Israel’s history and illustrated when the opponents ‘close their ears’ to Stephen’s vision of the enthroned Son of Man, Jesus (Acts 7:57)—anticipates ongoing rejection, especially among the Jews. This conflict will build until the climactic scenes in Acts 28 where the rhetoric of perception dominates. In narrating the story this way, however, Luke presents the rejection as almost inevitable, its precedent made clear in the Scriptures, wherein the messianic suffering is similarly written.

4.1.5 Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26–40)

In Acts 8:26–40, Philip ‘preaches Jesus’ from the Scriptures to an Ethiopian Eunuch who responds positively with baptism. The narrative emphasises God’s role in initiating the conversion of the Ethiopian as God sets up an encounter with an ‘angel of the Lord’ who instructs Philip to go to the place where the meeting would happen (8:26). The Spirit further instructs Philip to join the chariot on which the man was riding (8:29). Philip, hearing that the man was reading from Isaiah, initiates a conversation with his question, “Do you *understand* what you are reading?” (ἀρά γε γινώσκεις ἃ ἀναγινώσκεις;) (8:30).

The official replies that he cannot by using a rhetorical question, often used in contexts where understanding is prominent: “How can I unless someone *guides* me?”

⁵⁷ Cf. Acts 2:23; 36; 3:13–15, 17; 4:25–28.

(δόξηγήσει με) (8:31; cf. Luke 4:22; 5:21; 24:6, 26, 38). The question confirms “...Luke’s conviction that Scripture is not self-interpreting.”⁵⁸ Thus the Ethiopian invites Philip into his chariot and asks him about whether the passage from which he is reading describes the prophet or someone else (8:31–34). That Luke wishes to use the rhetoric of perception once again to communicate his christology is made obvious when the narrator quotes the passage from Isaiah *en bloc*:

ὥς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη
καὶ ὥς ἄμνος ἐναντίον τοῦ κείραντος αὐτὸν ἄφωνος,
οὕτως οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ.
Ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει [αὐτοῦ] ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἦρθη·
τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται;
ὅτι αἴρεται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ. (Acts 8:32b–33; cf. Isa 53:7–8a)

In a word play with οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ (“he did not open his mouth”) from the quoted passage, Philip’s reply is introduced with ἀνοίξας δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ (“and Philip opened his mouth”) (Acts 8:35; cf. 8:32b). This usage of ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα shares much in common with its earlier use in Luke 1:64, including the involvement of an angel (Luke 1:11–20; Acts 8:26), the presence of the Spirit (Luke 1:67; Acts 8:29, 39), and prophetic speech (Luke 1:64, 67–79; Acts 8:35; cf. Luke 4:18; Acts 4:31).⁵⁹ In light of its use in the Septuagint for divinely enabled speech, it is best to see it as indicating prophetic speech here (as in Luke 1:64; Acts 10:34).⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Pervo, *Acts*, 225; though cf. Jacob Jervell, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, KEK 17 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 272–73.

⁵⁹ Cf. Acts 10:34; 18:14. It is not enough to say that ἀνοίγω + στόμα is a Semitism retained by Luke, nor that it may share something in common with Rabbinic language denoting “to open a lecture on Scripture.” Rather, it is a way of indicating prophetic speech, and particularly in Acts, it is associated with the proclamation of the gospel (contra David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* [New York: Arno Press, 1973], 434); C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: Preliminary Introduction and Commentary on Acts I–XIV*, vol. 1, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 431. While there may be some connection of Luke’s usage to Rabbinic usage of *pathah* in the sense of “open and expound,” one simply cannot determine the relationship with any precision.

⁶⁰ E.g., Exod 4:12, 15; Num 22:28; Psalms 77:2; Ezek 3:27; 33:22; Dan 3:2; cf. Psalm 50:17 (Joshua L. Mann, “Ἀνοίγω and Διανοίγω in Luke and Acts: ‘Opening’ as a Narrative Motif” [presented at the BNTC, St Andrews, UK, 2013]).

This is congruent with the notion that Jesus' witnesses are enabled by the Spirit to preach the gospel.⁶¹

Rather than give direct discourse at this point, the narrative simply indicates that Philip "...preached Jesus to him, beginning from this Scripture" (καὶ ἀρχάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς ταύτης εὐηγγελίσατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν) (8:35b). It is not hard for the reader to anticipate what will happen next, for Philip has already appeared 'preaching the word', 'preaching the good news concerning the kingdom of God' (8:4; cf. 8:5; 8:12), resulting in many baptisms (8:12).⁶² So the Ethiopian proves to be a positive model of perception as his understanding of Philip's preaching is confirmed by his desire to be baptised immediately upon the sight of water (8:36). No sooner has the official come up out of the water than does Philip disappear, underscoring once more that the whole encounter was divinely orchestrated (8:26, 29, 35, 39, 40).

Having noted the rhetoric of perception in the scene, consider now how it parallels the Emmaus episode in Luke 24. Morgan helpfully summarises probable parallels: (1) travellers are moving away from Jerusalem (Emmaus; Gaza); (2) one travelling party is joined by another; (3) 'spiritual blindness' toward the Scriptures is demonstrated on the road; (4) the solution includes scriptural exposition; (5)

⁶¹ Recall that in Luke 4:18, the filling of the Spirit, prophetic speech, and the proclamation of good news are closely tied together, and they serve as a paradigm for not only Jesus' ministry of proclamation, but that of the apostles. In Acts, the filling of the Spirit is often accompanied with boldness of speech (e.g., esp. Acts 4:31; cf. 2:4; 4:8, etc.) and should be understood within the context of prophetic speech (cf. Acts 2:16–21).

⁶² My interpretation of the role of God's and Philip's initiative in the passage contradicts that of Wilson (*Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts*, 2015, 113–49), who argues that this "unmanly" "castrated male" is portrayed "...as a powerful character via his narrative dominance, eager pursuit of 'the Way', and designation as a δυνάστης, or person of power" (148). My description of how the story unfolds seems to suggest otherwise. Further, it is unlikely that the Eunuch "initiates" his baptism, for his question—"what prevents me from being baptised?"—is surely a response to Philip's preaching (8:35) which a reader would readily assume from the context of Acts includes a call for repentance and baptism (8:12; cf. 2:38).

illumination brings about a recognition of Jesus; (6) positive responses follow (Emmaus disciples return to Jerusalem; the Eunuch is baptised); (7) a liturgical act is depicted (breaking of bread; baptism); and (8) the scene ends with a sudden disappearance (Jesus; Philip).⁶³ In these parallels the audience is drawn to consider and compare the responses of these characters especially to Luke's christological reading of the Scriptures.

In sum, Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch illustrates for the audience once again the importance of reading Scripture aright, particularly reading it christologically.⁶⁴ The passage from Isaiah, quoted at length, supports the earlier emphasis in the narrative on the scriptural necessity of the Messiah's suffering. Further, the Eunuch becomes another positive model of perception, inviting Philip to join him, not being afraid to ask him questions (cf. Luke 9:44), and ultimately proving to be a careful listener as his positive response implies. Significantly, this character illustrates that the witness of the Gospel is moving towards the 'ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8).⁶⁵ This will be further demonstrated in the similarly divinely orchestrated conversion of Cornelius, a Gentile God-fearer (10:1–2), and his 'relatives' and 'friends' (10:24), the faith of whom is demonstrated by the

⁶³ *Encountering Images*, 131–32. While I am hesitant about the language of “liturgical act”, the persuasiveness of the majority of the parallels is decisive. Recall from earlier discussion that Morgan similarly identifies parallels between six of what he calls “thoroughfare scenes”, all of which touch on the theme of divided response and spiritual understanding (96–97). Cf. Luke 18:35–43 (blind beggar); 19:1–10 (Zacchaeus), 36–38 (Triumphal Entry); 24:13–35 (Emmaus); Acts 8:26–40 (Ethiopian); 9:1–22 (Saul/Paul). Note, however, that the inverse is not true, i.e., the scenes where perception is prominent do not consistently contain the thoroughfare motif.

⁶⁴ Cf. Apollos, who is *δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς*, teaching about Jesus *ἀκριβῶς*, but nevertheless needs further instruction from Priscilla and Aquila who explain ‘the way of God’ *ἀκριβέστερον* (Acts 18:24–26). In turn, Apollos goes to Achaia where he publicly ‘refutes’ the Jews, showing ‘through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah’ (*διὰ τῶν γραφῶν εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν*) (18:28).

⁶⁵ Determining whether or not the Eunuch is a Gentile is unnecessary to affirm that his conversion still represents the outward move of the witness in accordance with Acts 1:8. For a discussion of the Eunuch's ethnicity, see Keener, *Acts*, 2:1560–67.

manifestation of the Holy Spirit and baptism (10:44–45, 48).⁶⁶ When Cornelius’ men give Peter the reason they have come to take him to Cornelius’ house, they tell how an angel told Cornelius that he was to ‘hear a word from you’ (ἀκοῦσαι ῥήματα παρὰ σοῦ) (10:22).⁶⁷ When Peter arrives, Cornelius demonstrates what Luke’s audience has come to know as a proper disposition for perception: “Now therefore we are all (πάντες) present before God to hear all (ἀκοῦσαι πάντα) of the things commanded you by the Lord” (10:33). Note the degree to which the group is ready to *listen*. Like Philip just earlier, Peter ‘opens his mouth’, indicating prophetic speech, to which the audience listens (cf. τοὺς ἀκούοντας τὸν λόγον) (10:44).⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Walton notes: “...God makes himself known to people in Acts away from the holy space of the Temple, such as in the desert to a eunuch (8:26–50), in an unclean Gentile household in Joppa (10:1–48), and in many places outside the land of Palestine during Paul’s travels” (“‘The Heavens Opened’: Cosmological and Theological Transformation in Luke and Acts,” in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology*, ed. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough, LNTS 355 [London: T & T Clark, 2008], 70); cf. Steve Walton, “A Tale of Two Perspectives? The Place of the Temple in Acts,” in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon J. Gathercole (Waynesboro: Paternoster, 2004), 135–49.

⁶⁷ Peter, in fact, becomes a model of perception in the passage, too. Initially he is “perplexed” (διηπόρει) about the vision (10:17), but continues to give it careful thought (διενημουμένον) (10:19). Whatever he does not yet understand, he obeys the Spirit anyway (10:19–20). By the time he arrives at Cornelius’ house, he appears to understand the vision (10:28–29), confirmed by the opening words of his prophetic speech, that he truly understands (ἐπ’ ἀληθείας καταλαμβάνομαι) (10:34). This journey to understanding is helpfully brought out in Miller, *Convinced That God Had Called Us*, 202, 206–16; cf. Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light: Aspects of Conversion in the New Testament*, OBT 20 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 107–22; Wilson underscores the importance of Cornelius’ vision told to Peter for his understanding (10:30–33), which may be implied (“Hearing the Word,” 474, 462–63).

⁶⁸ Cf. discussion above of ἀνοίγω + στόμα. The inspired nature of Peter, as Jesus’ witness, is underscored by the presence of God invoked by Cornelius in 10:33. Wilson likewise observes the language of perception in the Peter and Cornelius episode (“Hearing the Word,” 461–63, 474). However, Wilson is also interested in the visions of Peter and Cornelius. Recall that in this thesis, the focus is not on revelation or visions, as such, but on the rhetoric of perception; On visions, see Miller, *Convinced That God Had Called Us*. On ἀκοῦω in Acts 10:44, one should not read as much significance into its use here as it appears to serve primarily to differentiate the audience (listeners) from Peter and others with him, to clarify on whom the Spirit fell. Note that in Peter’s preaching to Cornelius, he says that God “granted that [Jesus] become visible” to his “witnesses chosen beforehand” (Acts 10:40–41), underscoring the notion of God’s providence over understanding Jesus’ identity once again.

4.1.6 Paul's Conversion and Ministry (Acts 9:1–19; 13:16–52; 26:18)

It should perhaps be no surprise that one of the central characters in Acts, the apostle Paul, should also be central to the rhetoric of perception. From his conversion in Acts 9 (retold in Acts 22 and 26), to his speech at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13), to the final stories of Acts, Paul's ministry is painted with the rhetoric of perception.⁶⁹

Acts 9:1–18 narrates Saul's dramatic encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus. Recall that Saul was introduced at Stephen's murder, and he was closely associated with those who 'closed their ears' to Stephen's vision of the enthroned Son of Man (Acts 8:1; cf. 7:56–57). He is reintroduced accordingly, 'still breathing threats and murder' against the Lord's disciples (9:1). Now, Saul falls to the ground at a flash of light from heaven and hears Jesus ask him, "Why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:3–4).⁷⁰ Saul's response, demonstrating his *spiritual* blindness, is to ask, "Who are you, Lord?" (9:5).⁷¹ Jesus then gives instructions to Saul on what to do next (Acts 9:5–6)—instructions similar to those received earlier by Philip (Acts 8:26, 29), and soon after by Ananias (Acts 9:10–16), Cornelius (Acts 10:3–6), and Peter (Acts 10:10–16, 19–20). The event left Saul unable to see, for "although his eyes were open, he could see nothing" (ἀνεωγμένων δὲ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ οὐδὲν ἑβλεπεν) (Acts 9:8).⁷² Ananias, following the Lord's instruction, meets Saul and says

⁶⁹ I describe what happened to Paul on the road to Damascus as a "conversion" for convenience, without necessarily implying a "change of religion". For a similarly careful use of the term with summary of the issues and the scholarly debate, see: Keener, *Acts*, 2:1614–17.

⁷⁰ Wilson draws attention to all of the visual and auditory language in the passage ("Hearing the Word," 8).

⁷¹ The connection between Paul's literal and metaphorical blindness is often noted. E.g., Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness*, 187; Dennis Hamm, "Paul's Blindness and Its Healing: Clues to Symbolic Intent (Acts 9; 22 and 26)," *Biblica* 71.1 (1990): 63–72; Hamm, "Sight to the Blind."

⁷² Wilson compellingly traces a number of ways the narrative emphasises Paul's loss of self-sufficiency in Acts 9, as well as his continued subservience to Jesus (Wilson, *Unmanly Men*, 154–89). However, I am less sure about Wilson's insistence that Paul's masculinity is foregrounded such that an ancient reader would evaluate the event in terms of masculine norms; Hartsock likewise describes Paul's pitiful condition (*Sight and Blindness*, 188–89).

that he has been sent by the Lord so that Saul might regain his sight and be filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17). At this moment (εὐθέως), something like scales (ὡς λεπίδες) fall from Saul's eyes and he regains his sight (ἀνέβλεψέν) (Acts 9:18). His newfound spiritual understanding is nearly immediate as he is baptised (9:18) and powerfully proclaiming 'Jesus' (9:20) within a matter of days.⁷³

Paul recounts his conversion two other times in Acts (22:6–21; 26:12–18) yet “...the eyesight imagery shifts to a completely metaphorical sort,”⁷⁴ explained by Hamm as ‘transmutation’ drawing on light and vision imagery from Isaiah “...to a metaphor describing the end-time mission of Israel, Jesus and Paul.”⁷⁵ The three accounts of Paul's conversion thus touch on several themes prominent in Luke and Acts, especially that of sight, blindness, and illumination (esp. Luke 4:18; 7:22; 24:31; Acts 26:18; 28:26–27). In Paul's retelling in Acts 22, Ananias tells Paul that God has ‘appointed’ (προεχειρίσατό) him to ‘know his will’ (γινῶναι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ) and to ‘see’ (ιδεῖν) the righteous one (cf. Acts 7:52) and ‘hear’ (ἀκοῦσαι) a voice from his mouth (22:14). Like the disciples during Jesus' ministry, Paul appears to be ‘granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom’ (Luke 8:10), receiving illumination not unlike Luke 24:45. The third retelling provides irony: the blinded Saul has been chosen by the Lord to ‘open the eyes’ (ανοῖξαι ὀφθαλμούς) of the Gentiles, as Paul recounts before Agrippa (Acts 26:18; cf. 9:15–16), a scene that deserves further comment.

In Acts 26:1–29, Paul offers a defense before Agrippa against his Jewish accusers.⁷⁶ During the defense, Paul recounts his encounter with Jesus on the

⁷³ Cf. the immediate effect of illumination in Luke 24:45 and Acts 16:14.

⁷⁴ Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness*, 189.

⁷⁵ Hamm, “Paul's Blindness and Its Healing,” 71.

⁷⁶ The setting is Caesarea (Acts 23:33; 25:13), and the defence was well attended (25:23) though his accusers are not present.

Damascus road, including an expansion of Jesus' words concerning the purpose for which Paul is being sent to the Gentiles (cf. 9:15–16; 22:21):

...ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμούς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτὸς εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, τοῦ λαβεῖν αὐτοὺς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ κληῖρον ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πίστει τῇ εἰς ἐμέ.

...to open their eyes, to turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, to receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:18).

The language is probably drawn from Isaiah (esp. 42:7, 16).⁷⁷ The mission of opening eyes and revealing light is a recurring theme in Luke-Acts, as has been shown.⁷⁸ With the possible exception of Acts 9:40, occurrences of ἀνοίγω or διανοίγω with a faculty of sight or perception develop the theme of divine illumination in Luke-Acts whereby perception is enabled, particularly of the scriptural necessity of the Messiah's death and resurrection (esp. Luke 24:31–32, 45). It is thus not surprising to find this encapsulation of Luke's christology in Acts 26:22–23.⁷⁹ Illumination is closely associated with repentance and conversion in Luke-Acts, as in Acts 26:18.

Paul is called, then, to do for others what God has done for him: to open their eyes (Acts 26:18), to testify of the scriptural necessity of Jesus the Messiah's death and resurrection and call his listeners to repentance (26:18; 22–23; cf. Luke 24:44–47). One of the most significant examples of Paul doing this, his speech at Pisidian Antioch, comes near the beginning of the first major section devoted to his ministry (Acts 13:1–14:28). Here, he and Barnabas set out from the church at Syrian Antioch

⁷⁷ Hamm, "Paul's Blindness and Its Healing," 67–69.

⁷⁸ Luke 1:78, 79; 2:29–32, 35; 4:18–19; 7:22; 8:10; 24:31; 45; Acts 9:8, 18; 13:47; 26:18, 23; 28:26–27; cf. Luke 8:16–17; 10:23–24; 11:33–36; 19:42

⁷⁹ On the parallels between Luke 24:44–47 and Acts 26:16–23, see: Jacques Dupont, "La mission de Paul d'après Actes 26:16-23 et la mission des Apôtres d'après Luc 24:44-49 et Actes 1:8," in *Paul and Paulinism: essays in honour of C.K. Barrett*, ed. M. D. Hooker and S. G. Wilson (London: SPCK, 1982).

(13:1–4), preaching the ‘word of God’ (13:5) in various cities of Asia Minor, returning eventually to Syrian Antioch to report how God ‘opened a door of faith to the Gentiles’ (14:27). Opposition from fellow Jews was anticipated already in the Lord’s words to Ananias: “I will show [Paul] how much he must suffer on account of my name” (9:16). Paul had hardly started preaching before plots for his death came (9:23–24, 29). These conflicts with Jews, especially ‘from Asia’, continue in his ministry in Asia.⁸⁰

The location and length of Paul’s speech at Pisidian Antioch should signal for the audience that it is typical of his synagogue ministry.⁸¹ Doble sets the context succinctly:

Paul’s sermon (Acts 13:16b–41), the first of a two-part unit (13:14–52), reports to synagogue congregants God’s rebuilding of David’s house (13:32–33), while linked events on the following Sabbath initiate Paul and Barnabas’s ‘turning to the Gentiles’ (13:46–47). Luke thus portrayed Paul fulfilling God’s programme (13:14b–52) later located by James in Amos’s words (15:13–31).⁸²

Paul’s speech, like Peter’s at Pentecost, emphasises Jesus as the royal Davidic Messiah (13:22–23; 32–37), condemned to death in fulfilment of the Prophets (13:27), raised by God from the dead (13:30), and through whom forgiveness of sins, salvation, is offered (13:23, 26, 38–39). The last lines of Paul’s speech are the most significant for the rhetoric of perception.⁸³ First, Paul warns, “Therefore *watch* (βλέπετε οὖν) lest what was spoken in the prophets comes about” (13:40). Then comes a warning from Habakkuk 1:5: “*See* (ἴδετε) you scoffers, and marvel and be ruined; because I am performing a work in your days, a work which you will never

⁸⁰ Acts 13:45–47, 50; 14:2, 4–5, 19; 20:18–19; cf. 17:5, 13; 18:12–13; 21:11, 17, 27; 22:22–23, 30; 23:12, 14–15; 24:27; 25:2–3, 7.

⁸¹ Doble, “The Psalms in the New Testament,” 106.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ On the programmatic nature of 13:41, see Wolter, “Israel’s Future,” 320–24.

believe (οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε) even if someone describes it in detail (ἐκδιηγῆται)” (Acts 13:41). This is mirrored by Paul’s opening command to ‘listen’ (ἀκούσατε) (13:16b). The warning from Habakkuk echoes earlier instances of the rhetoric of perception, like Luke 8:18, to ‘watch how you listen’, and Luke 16:31, in which persuasion is rooted in *listening* to Moses and the Prophets, or Peter’s imperative to know and listen to his words (Acts 2:14, 36). During his ‘trial’, Jesus warned the Council that if he told them he was the Messiah, they would not believe (Luke 22:68). Indeed, Paul’s synagogue audience could find similar warnings in Paul’s description of ‘Jerusalem’ and its ‘rulers’ who remained ignorant (ἀγνοήσαντες) of the salvation sent to them (τοῦτον) (cf. Acts 13:26) *in spite of* the voice (τὰς φωνὰς) of the ‘prophets read every Sabbath’ (13:27).⁸⁴

Many Jews and proselytes heed the warning, their belief indicated by the instruction to them to ‘continue in the grace of God’.⁸⁵ However, in a second synagogue meeting the following Sabbath, some of the Jews stir up the crowds against Paul and Barnabas, and the two missionaries say, “Look (ἰδοὺ), we are turning to the Gentiles,” quoting Isaiah 49:6 as God’s command to them (Acts 13:46–47). When the Gentiles hear (ἀκούω) this, they rejoice and many more of them believe (13:48).

In summary, Paul’s call to a ministry of illumination (Acts 26:18) comes when Jesus confronts him with bright light and blindness on the road to Damascus (9:1–9). For the audience, the dramatic character reversal seen in Paul highlights God’s power and providence over the spread of the gospel *and* over its opposition.

⁸⁴ Note the use of ἀγνοέω in Luke 9:45 for the disciples’ misunderstanding due to divine concealment.

⁸⁵ Cf. Acts 11:23; esp. 20:24 ‘gospel of the grace of God’; cf. 20:32 ‘the word of his grace’. That a conversion is depicted here will be further defended in the second part of this chapter.

Further, the audience should interpret Paul’s Pisidian Antioch speech as a template of his preaching and the divided responses thereafter as typical (cf. 18:6; 28:24–28). The failure of many Jews to respond on the second Sabbath and the turning to the Gentiles are both rooted by Paul in Scripture, explicitly from Habakkuk (Acts 13:41) and Isaiah (Acts 13:47), and implicitly in Paul’s insistence that Jerusalem’s recent rejection of Jesus was a fulfilment of the Prophets (13:27). Thus like the narrative of Stephen, Luke again presents the rejection of Jesus and his witnesses as part and parcel of the divine plan. The warning to ‘watch’ (βλέπετε) and ‘see’ (ἴδετε) or be judged further underscores for the audience the high stakes of correct understanding (13:40–41).

4.1.7 Lydia’s Conversion (Acts 16:11–15)

A clear parallel to Jesus’ earlier illumination of the disciples in Luke 24 is found in Lydia’s conversion, and while the relevant passage is brief and straightforward, this parallel invites comment. In Philippi, Paul begins speaking to some women assembled outside on the Sabbath (Acts 16:12–13), an encounter that once again begins by divine orchestration (16:9–10).⁸⁶ One woman who was listening (ἤκουεν) to Paul, Lydia, was converted after “the Lord opened her heart to give heed to the things spoken by Paul” (ἥς ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου) (Acts 16:14). Luke’s audience would easily infer that ‘the things spoken by Paul’ was a christological exposition of Scripture in much the same way

⁸⁶ Gaventa notes the potential surprise for the audience that the vision of Macedonia results in a meeting of women, one of whom—a foreigner—converts (*Acts*); cf. Alexandra Gruca-Macaulay, *Lydia as a Rhetorical Construct in Acts*, ESEC 18 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 95; Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: 15:1–23:35*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 2288–93.

as in Pisidian Antioch (see above).⁸⁷ As in Luke 24:45, here a faculty of perception is divinely ‘opened’ (διανοίγω) which results in an understanding of the message.⁸⁸

That προσέχειν carries the sense ‘heed’ and indicates understanding is confirmed by the outcome, baptism (Acts 16:15; cf. 8:6, 10).

What is the significance of the parallel to the illumination in Luke 24? Gruca-Macaulay’s analysis is helpful. She similarly sees a parallel with Luke 24, particularly in the Emmaus episode’s language of opening, hearts, and an invitation to stay.⁸⁹ In her analysis of Lydia through the lens of physiognomy, Gruca-Macaulay overturns the prevailing interpretation of Lydia as an ideal character by showing how Lydia’s ethnicity, occupation, association with ‘purple’, and her name “...cohere into a deeply rooted topos...” that “...shades Lydia as an immoral, deceptive, unfaithful ‘outsider’.”⁹⁰ Thus when Lydia takes centre stage in Philippi, becoming a convert whose home becomes the missionaries’ centre of operations (16:15, 40), Luke subverts the expectations of the audience.⁹¹ The parallel to Emmaus, then, may indicate to the audience that “...the Lord treats Lydia as if she were an authentic disciple of Jesus....”.⁹² Certainly Lydia becomes a positive model of perception for the audience, and her likely questionable status indicates that negative stereotypes

⁸⁷ Bates, “Closed-Minded,” 547.

⁸⁸ Note that here “the Lord” opens Lydia’s heart; in Luke 24:45, Jesus opens the mind of the disciples. The close association of Jesus with God by the use of κύριος is at home in the narrative (esp. Acts 2:36). On this, see Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology*. Whether κύριος here refers to Jesus, however, is not made clear.

⁸⁹ Gruca-Macaulay, *Lydia as a Rhetorical Construct*, 154–56. It is somewhat surprising that the illumination in Luke 24:45 receives no mention.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 269; On physiognomy in Luke-Acts, see Parsons, *Body and Character*.

⁹¹ Note how the authorial presence in the first person plural (ἡμᾶς) (16:15) may further underscore the credibility of the events. Determining the precise nature of the “we” passages in Acts is not central to this thesis, and thus will be avoided. For a discussion of issues, see: A. J. M. Wedderburn, “The ‘We’-passages in Acts: On the Horns of a Dilemma,” *ZNW* 93 (2002): 78–98.

⁹² Gruca-Macaulay, *Lydia as a Rhetorical Construct*, 225; Teresa J. Calpino also sees Lydia (and Tabitha) as exemplifying discipleship (Teresa J. Calpino, *Women, Work and Leadership in Acts*, WUNT 2 364 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014], 180–226).

are untrustworthy indicators of how or whether a character *understands*. Here again God is actively involved in initiating the conversion of Gentiles (cf. Acts 8:26–40; 10:1–48; 13:48). Indeed, God has ‘opened a door of faith to the Gentiles’ (14:27).

4.2 Closed Eyes and Open Preaching (Acts 28:16–31)⁹³

Having seen that the rhetoric of perception continues to play a key role in the plot of Acts, as in Luke, it is not surprising to find it present in Acts’ final scenes. At the end of the story, Paul, having finally arrived in Rome to appear before Caesar, invites Jewish leaders together and presents himself as innocent of the charges brought against him by the Jews in Jerusalem, claiming, “For the sake of the hope of Israel I wear this chain” (Acts 28:20). Those in the audience say that they know nothing of Paul’s circumstances but wish to hear what he thinks of this sect that is ‘spoken against everywhere’ (28:22). Desiring to *hear* (*ἀκοῦσαι*) (28:22) further from Paul, on another day, many (more) Jews come together to hear Paul evangelise (28:23) and their response is divided (28:24). Paul, in response to the disagreement, cites Isaiah 6:9–10, which emphasises the extreme obduracy of Israel with the language of perception, adding that ‘this salvation’ has been sent to the Gentiles who ‘will *listen*’ (Acts 28:25–28). The final two verses in Acts depict Paul awaiting trial for two years, welcoming ‘all’ who would come, preaching ‘with all boldness, unhindered’ (28:30–31).

Thus Luke-Acts ends by drawing once again from the well of Isaiah 6, echoing the Parable of the Sower with its warning to listen carefully to the teaching

⁹³ A version of this section (4.2) was presented to the Book of Acts seminar group at the 2014 British New Testament Society annual conference meeting in St. Andrews (UK). I am grateful for the helpful feedback from those in attendance.

about the kingdom (Luke 8:10–18). However, not unlike the response represented by three of the four soils of Luke 8, many in Paul’s audience do not listen, indicated by the fact that they do not believe (Acts 28:24). To understand the implications of the rhetoric of perception in this passage, it is crucial to determine the application of the citation from Isaiah. Scholars interpret this passage somewhere along a spectrum on which one end is the view that Luke depicts a complete rejection of the gospel by the Jewish people, bringing an end to the Jewish mission and any future large-scale Jewish repentance. On the other end of the spectrum is the view that Luke depicts a partial rejection of *some* Jews in Rome—a rejection that perhaps opens the Gentile mission but does not thereby close the possibility of future Jewish repentance.⁹⁴

Some of the important interpretive questions in Acts 28 which are determinative in this regard are as follows: (1) Does the fact that some Jews were ‘persuaded’ (ἐπείθοντο) (28:24) imply the conversion of some, thereby lessening the extent of rejection in the passage? (2) Is the application of Isaiah 6:9–10 to (a) all Jews corporately; (b) unbelieving Jews in Rome; or (c) unbelieving Jews in general? (3) Does Paul’s quotation from Isaiah 6:9–10 and his following statement in Acts 28:28 leave open future Jewish reception of the gospel, and if so, to what extent? (4) Does Acts 28:30–31 assume a primarily Gentile mission and/or imply continued openness to Jewish evangelisation? (5) How does Acts 28 fit with parallels found earlier in Acts and Luke’s overall theological trajectory on the matter of the Jewish people? For convenience, how major interpreters have answered these questions is roughly charted below.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Cf. Wolter, “Israel’s Future,” 307–8.

⁹⁵ One should bear in mind that the dichotomy presented in the chart is for heuristic purposes, and some interpreters do not commit wholeheartedly to one side or the other.

	likely	unlikely
1. ‘persuaded’ implies ‘converted’ (v. 24).	Jervell ⁹⁶ ; Barrett ⁹⁷ ; Fitzmyer ⁹⁸ ; Witherington ⁹⁹ ; Bock ¹⁰⁰ ; Schaefer ¹⁰¹	Haenchen ¹⁰² ; Conzelmann ¹⁰³ ; Sanders ¹⁰⁴ ; Bruce ¹⁰⁵ ; Tannehill ¹⁰⁶ ; Pervo ¹⁰⁷ ; Marshall ¹⁰⁸ ; Troftgruben ¹⁰⁹
2. Isa 6:9–10 applied primarily to unbelieving Jews (not ‘the Jews’ more generally).	Barrett ¹¹⁰ ; Fitzmyer ¹¹¹ ; Witherington ¹¹² ; Bock ¹¹³ ; Jervell ¹¹⁴ ; Wolter ¹¹⁵	Haenchen ¹¹⁶ ; Conzelmann ¹¹⁷ ; Sanders ¹¹⁸ ; Bruce ¹¹⁹ ; Tannehill ¹²⁰ ; Pervo ¹²¹ ; Schaefer ¹²²

⁹⁶ Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 63, 71–72 n. 21.

⁹⁷ C. K. Barrett, *The Acts of the Apostles: Preliminary Introduction and Commentary on Acts XV–XXVIII*, vol. 2, 2 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 1244.

⁹⁸ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles* (Anchor Bible, 1998), 795. Fitzmyer allows for the possibility.

⁹⁹ Witherington, *Acts*, 801–2.

¹⁰⁰ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 754. Bock supports a ‘positive’ meaning to the word here as elsewhere in Acts, though he does not assert it implies conversion.

¹⁰¹ Christoph Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels Bei Lukas: Biblisch-Frühjüdische Zukunftsvorstellungen Im Lukanischen Doppelwerk Im Vergleich Zu Röm 9-11*, BZNW 190 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 357–58.

¹⁰² Haenchen, *Acts*, 723–24.

¹⁰³ Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel, and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 227.

¹⁰⁴ Jack T. Sanders, *The Jews in Luke-Acts* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 298. Note, however, that Sanders seems entertain the possibility that some were converted.

¹⁰⁵ F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts*, Revised., NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 506.

¹⁰⁶ Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation: The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 347.

¹⁰⁷ Pervo, *Acts*, 684 n. 42.

¹⁰⁸ Marshall, *Acts*, 424.

¹⁰⁹ Troy M. Troftgruben, *A Conclusion Unhindered: A Study of the Ending of Acts within Its Literary Environment*, WUNT 280 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 125.

¹¹⁰ Barrett, *Acts XV–XXVIII*, 2:1245–46.

¹¹¹ Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 795; Implied in the comment: “Now Paul applies them to the Jews of Rome who have closed their eyes and ears to the Christian gospel.”

¹¹² Witherington, *Acts*, 802–3.

¹¹³ Bock, *Acts*, 755.

¹¹⁴ Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 63.

¹¹⁵ Wolter specifies that the condemnation is final for those who rejected Jesus as Messiah in Paul’s generation, which from Luke’s perspective, is in the past (“Israel’s Future”).

¹¹⁶ Haenchen, *Acts*, 724.

¹¹⁷ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 227.

¹¹⁸ Sanders, *The Jews*, 298.

¹¹⁹ Bruce, *Acts*, 506–09; Though Bruce does qualify that the rejection was not by “Jews as a whole” (509), perhaps attempting to leave open the possibility of individual conversion.

¹²⁰ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 347–48.

¹²¹ Pervo, *Acts*, 685; Here Pervo’s comments imply this, though he does not say so explicitly.

¹²² Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*, 350–51.

	likely	unlikely
3. Isa 6:9–10/Acts 28:28 leaves open future Jewish reception.	Marshall ¹²³ ; Barrett ¹²⁴ ; Witherington ¹²⁵ ; Bock ¹²⁶ ; Schaefer ¹²⁷ ; Troftgruben; Wolter	Haenchen ¹²⁸ ; Conzelmann ¹²⁹ ; Jervell ¹³⁰ ; Sanders ¹³¹ ; Tannehill ¹³² ; Pervo ¹³³
4. Acts 28:30–31 implies Gentile <i>and</i> Jewish evangelism.	Barrett ¹³⁴ ; Tannehill ¹³⁵ ; Fitzmyer ¹³⁶ ; Bock ¹³⁷ ; Witherington ¹³⁸ ; Troftgruben; Wolter	Haenchen ¹³⁹ ; Jervell ¹⁴⁰ ; Sanders ¹⁴¹ ; Pervo ¹⁴² ; Marshall ¹⁴³ ; Schaefer ¹⁴⁴
5. Luke-Acts' trajectory as a whole leaves open future Jewish reception	Marshall ¹⁴⁵ ; Tannehill ¹⁴⁶ ; Barrett ¹⁴⁷ ; Fitzmyer ¹⁴⁸ ; Witherington ¹⁴⁹ ; Bock ¹⁵⁰ ; Schaefer ¹⁵¹ ; Troftgruben; Wolter ¹⁵²	Haenchen ¹⁵³ ; Conzelmann ¹⁵⁴ ; Jervell ¹⁵⁵ ; Sanders ¹⁵⁶ ; Pervo ¹⁵⁷

¹²³ Marshall, *Acts*, 425.

¹²⁴ Barrett, *Acts XV–XXVIII*, 2:1246.

¹²⁵ Witherington, *Acts*, 802–3, 805.

¹²⁶ Bock, *Acts*, 755–57.

¹²⁷ Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*, 359–62. Schaefer sees an allusion in Paul's encounter to Isaiah 65:1–8, and thus remains open to future Jewish repentance. Schaefer also notes that Luke does not explicitly development a remnant theology as does Paul in Rom 9–11.

¹²⁸ Haenchen, *Acts*, 724.

¹²⁹ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 227.

¹³⁰ Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 63–64. Jervell's argument will be taken up further below.

¹³¹ Sanders, *The Jews*, 298–99.

¹³² Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 347f.; Though cf. Robert C. Tannehill, "Israel in Luke-Acts: A Tragic Story," *JBL* 104.1 (1985): 83–85.

¹³³ Pervo, *Acts*, 681, 685–86.

¹³⁴ Barrett, *Acts XV–XXVIII*, 2:1250–53.

¹³⁵ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 351.

¹³⁶ Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 797.

¹³⁷ Bock, *Acts*, 756, 758–60. Bock argues for a large scale Jewish reception yet future.

¹³⁸ Witherington, *Acts*, 803–5, 813.

¹³⁹ Haenchen, *Acts*, 726.

¹⁴⁰ Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 63–64.

¹⁴¹ Sanders, *The Jews*, 298–99.

¹⁴² Pervo, *Acts*, 686; Pervo finds it likely this was "primarily a Gentile mission."

¹⁴³ Marshall, *Acts*, 427. Implied in the comment on v. 31: "The final picture is of Paul preaching to the Gentiles..."

¹⁴⁴ Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*, 358.

¹⁴⁵ Marshall, *Acts*, 425.

¹⁴⁶ Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 350; Tannehill, "Israel."

¹⁴⁷ Barrett, *Acts XV–XXVIII*, 2:1246, 1250.

¹⁴⁸ Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 791.

¹⁴⁹ Witherington, *Acts*, 803–5–16.

¹⁵⁰ Bock, *Acts*, 756.

¹⁵¹ Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*, 361–62.

¹⁵² Wolter goes further, saying that in Acts 28, "Luke...seems to envision a new epoch of the Christian mission beginning in Rome, and not a word suggests that this mission will not reach Jews as well" ("Israel's Future," 319).

¹⁵³ Haenchen, *Acts*, 726.

Absent from the scholarly discussion has been a sufficient accounting for how the rhetoric of perception in Luke-Acts relates to Jewish unbelief at the end of Acts. A brief analysis of the structure of the passage will help put the scene and its sequence in perspective, after which an analysis of the details of the passage will be undertaken under three headings: (1) the meaning of ‘persuaded’ (ἐπειθόντο) (28:24); (2) Acts 28:25b–28, Isaiah 6:9–10, and future Jewish conversion; and (3) the nature of the mission presented in Acts 28:30–31. This will be followed by a synthesis that briefly reflects on the rhetoric of perception in Acts 28 in the context of Luke-Acts.

4.2.1 Narrative Sequence and Discourse in Acts 28:23–28

Acts 28:23–28 does not *simply* depict Paul preaching a day-long sermon, at the end of which his audience decides ‘yea’ or ‘nay’, and because they cannot agree, they are rebuked and thus depart. Rather, the various verbal aspects used to carry the action of the discourse indicate a more ambiguous sequence and tempo.¹⁵⁸ Note that the only aorist indicative in 28:23–28 outside of quoted speech is ἤλθον in verse 23. The aorist typically makes up the narrative backbone of the story.¹⁵⁹ In 28:23–28, then, ἤλθον is the vertebra from which the other verbs and participles attach. In the same passage four imperfect indicatives occur, all with the same purpose of supplementing the

¹⁵⁴ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 227.

¹⁵⁵ Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 63–4.

¹⁵⁶ Sanders, *The Jews*.

¹⁵⁷ Pervo, *Acts*, 685–88. Pervo strongly implies this view.

¹⁵⁸ While grammarians and linguists do not entirely agree on whether or not Koine Greek grammaticalises time in the indicative mood, there is significant agreement on the importance of perfective and imperfective aspect for the verbal tense-forms that concern us here. See, e.g., Porter, *Verbal Aspect*; Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*; Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, Indicative Mood*; Campbell dissents from Porter in claiming that the perfect encodes imperfective aspect; For an important recent challenge to Porter’s view, see Steve E. Runge, “Contrastive Substitution and the Greek Verb: Reassessing Porter’s Argument,” *NovT* 56 (2014): 154–73.

¹⁵⁹ Fanning, *Verbal Aspect*, 191; Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 45 n. 3.

narrative mainline with descriptive information. Thus on the mainline, the Jews simply ‘came’ to Paul (aorist in 28:23). The rest of the information in 28:23–28 describes what happened, but not in the unambiguous sequence that might be expected if aorist verbs were used (i.e., this happened, then this happened, etc.). To illustrate the effect of verbal aspect: If this were a film, the Jews’ arrival at Paul’s quarters is a wide shot from above (perfective aspect), but the rest of the scene is presented up close and unfolding (imperfective aspect). None of the imperfects depict completed action in the context. After the Jewish audience arrives, Paul ‘was explaining’ the gospel (imperfect, 28:23); some ‘were being persuaded’ (imperfect, 28:24a); others ‘were disbelieving’ (imperfect, 28:24b). There are no temporal indicators in 28:24 that suggest the audience responded only after Paul finished preaching.¹⁶⁰ Rather, since both Paul’s preaching and the response of the audience are depicted with imperfective aspect, viewing the action internally and uncompleted, the sense is that in the course of his preaching, the members of his audience, perhaps at various moments, were being convinced or were disbelieving.¹⁶¹ The precise sequence thus remains ambiguous.

The same ambiguity is present in verse 25. The main verb is an imperfect with two possible temporal modifiers: the present nominative participial clause (ἀσύμφωνοι...ὄντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους) and the aorist genitive absolute participial clause (εἰπόντος τοῦ Παύλου ῥῆμα ἔν...).

¹⁶⁰ Note that although Paul’s preaching is said to go on ‘from morning until evening’ (ἀπὸ πρωῒ ἕως ἑσπέρας) (v. 23), the action is still presented as durative and not complete.

¹⁶¹ Troftgruben sees the imperfect tense in v. 24 as “indicating not decisive verdicts but conclusions yet in process,” citing Hauser and Tannehill in support. But he overlooks the comparable use of the imperfect elsewhere in vv. 23–28. Interestingly, Troftgruben makes much of the imperfect verb followed by three present participles in vv. 30–31 (all of which are imperfective aspect, though Troftgruben does not consider aspect) (*Conclusion*, 125, 140–41); Cf. Hermann J. Hauser, *Strukturen der Abschlusserzählung der Apostelgeschichte (Apg 28,16–31)*, AB 86 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 66; Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 347.

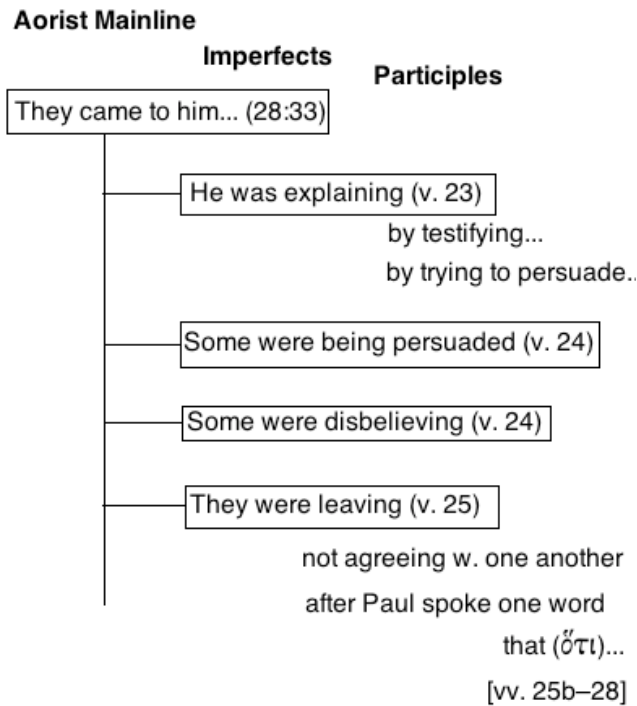
(‘as/when they were in disagreement, they were leaving...’). This is a way to simply say that they were leaving in disagreement. So what is the purpose of the complicated construction? The participial clause both places focus on the disagreement (ἀσύμφωνοι), which leads the sentence, and also views the action internally, as unfolding (imperfective aspect with a present participle). For Luke’s audience, the emphasis on a divided response will be a familiar one in light of the earlier use of the rhetoric of perception (from Luke 2:34–35 on).¹⁶² The aorist genitive absolute likely indicates antecedent time (‘they were leaving *after* Paul spoke’) or possibly contemporaneous time (‘they were leaving *as* Paul spoke’).¹⁶³ The first implies that the process of leaving began *after* Paul’s rebuke, possibly because of it. The second depicts Paul as speaking while they are leaving—as if speaking to their backs.¹⁶⁴ The former seems more likely because Paul’s rebuke is in response to their disagreement.¹⁶⁵ Note the discourse relations illustrated below.

¹⁶² As argued exhaustively above.

¹⁶³ Barrett prefers antecedent time (*Acts XV–XXVIII*, 2:1244). The absolute could also indicate cause (“they were leaving in disagreement because Paul spoke one word...”). It seems that the disagreement preceded this “word”, however.

¹⁶⁴ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, SP (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), 471: “The sentence structure almost allows us to hear Paul addressing these words to the backs of the departing Jews.”

¹⁶⁵ Note that manuscripts containing v. 29 depict disagreement after Paul’s rebuke. Further, it looks as if the variant could be an attempt to clarify the ambiguous timing of v. 25. In light of this, as well as its relatively weak external evidence, it is likely an addition. Metzger thinks “The addition was probably made because of the abrupt transition from ver. 28 to ver. 30” (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 444).



Thus one can see that the passage presents the activity of Paul's preaching and his audience's response vividly with the action unfolding. By depicting it this way, Luke draws attention to the divided response, leading to the rebuke. With this general understanding of the scene in view, an investigation of other details of the passage can be carried out.

4.2.2 The Meaning of 'Persuaded' (28:24)

In Acts 28:24, some of the Jews are 'persuaded' (ἐπείθοντο) while others 'disbelieve' (ἠπίστανται). On the face of it, it seems reasonable to understand ἐπείθοντο as depicting a response opposite to ἠπίστανται, making it likely that 'persuade' indicates belief in the gospel just as ἠπίστανται indicates unbelief. Yet this reading might be challenged on the following grounds: (1) the verb πείθω itself does not clearly indicate conversion, especially since it is used in the imperfect; (2) the quotation of Isaiah 6:9–10 along with Acts 28:28 implies the whole audience has rejected the gospel;

and (3) parallel passages call into question whether the author really wishes to depict Jewish conversion (esp. 13:42ff.; 18:4ff.). A careful analysis, however, shows that these claims are mistaken.

4.2.2.1 *πείθω* in Luke-Acts and the Application of Paul's Rebuke

It is important to note that *πείθω* is primarily used elsewhere in Luke-Acts to depict believing with conviction and/or persuasion to the point of taking action (Luke 16:31; 20:6; Acts 5:36, 37, 39; 12:20; 14:19; 17:4; 19:26; 21:14; 23:21; 26:28; 27:11; 28:23).¹⁶⁶ It does not appear to be used in Luke-Acts of forming or attempting to form a lightly-held opinion, nor simply giving heed, even in the imperfect.¹⁶⁷ When *πείθω* is used of Paul's evangelistic activity, as in the passage being examined (cf. Acts 28:23), the intended result of the action implied is clearly full belief/conversion (Acts 18:4; 19:8; 26:28; 28:23; cf. 19:26).¹⁶⁸ In Acts 17:4, *πείθω* is used in the passive

¹⁶⁶ Three instances in Acts are not included here, one of which is Paul speaking of his own being persuaded of something (Acts 26:27). The other two (Acts 13:43; 18:4) are discussed next since they are more difficult.

¹⁶⁷ A possible exception to the use of *πείθω* for forming a lightly-held opinion is 27:11 where a centurion is "more persuaded" by one party than another. On the effect of the imperfect form in 28:24, Bruce suggests it softens the sense of *πείθω* with his translation "gave heed" or, in another instance, "were on their way to being persuaded." F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts* (NLCNT; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1965), 531. In the earlier edition of Bruce's commentary, he provides a note on the ASV 1901 translation of v. 24 ("And some believed..."): "Or at least 'gave heed'; the imperfect tense...need mean no more than this." In the 1990 edition (in the NICNT series), Bruce has his own translation of v. 24, "...were on the way to being persuaded...", without the earlier explanation. This interpretation of the imperfect is unlikely for the following reasons: (1) The verb in contrast (*ἠπίστανον*) also appears in the imperfect but does not function in this way; (2) Other occurrences of *πείθω* in the imperfect tense-form and passive voice in Acts do not function the way Bruce suggests for this instance (Acts 5:36, 37; 27:11; cf. 13:43; 18:4); (3) Here and elsewhere in Acts, rejection of the gospel is not a process that begins with partial persuasion, thus the imperfects in 28:24 are not likely ingressive ("began to be persuaded/disbelieve"), conative ("attempted to be persuaded/disbelieve"; Acts 18:4; cf. 19:8; 26:28), or tendential ("almost persuaded/disbelieved") (Cf. Spicq, "*πείθω, πείθομαι, πειθός, πεισμονή, πεποίθησις*" TLNT 3:66–79); and (4) The use of the imperfect is easily explained aspectually and accords with other uses of the imperfect from 28:23–28 (see earlier discussion on the structure of this passage).

¹⁶⁸ In Acts 19:26, it is Demetrius who is describing Paul as "persuading" and "turning away" people from pagan practices. Similarly, in Acts 13:43, Paul and Barnabas are "persuading" recent converts to "remain in the grace of God," a reference to continuing in the faith (this passage will be taken up again below).

voice to describe the response to Paul’s evangelism: many ‘were persuaded’ and *joined* him and Silas—a strong implication of conversion. This is the closest parallel to 28:24—each is a response to Paul’s preaching depicted in the passive voice with *πεῖθω*—and it appears to indicate conversion. Thus while not decisive in itself, the usage of *πεῖθω* in Luke-Acts and its contrast with *ἀπιστέω* in Acts 28:24 strongly support the view that it depicts conversion in Acts 28:24.

4.2.2.2 The Application of Isaiah 6:9–10 in Acts 28:25–28

It would seem that if Paul’s rebuke in Acts 28:25–28 is intended for his entire audience, there is little hope that any significant number had been converted.¹⁶⁹ Inversely, if some number had been converted, Paul’s rebuke must have been intended only for those who rejected the gospel.¹⁷⁰ In light of the rhetoric of perception elsewhere in Luke-Acts, and especially the obduracy motif earlier observed in Luke (e.g., 8:10; 19:41–42), however, it seems that the rebuke is against the response of the Jewish people in Rome in a corporate sense, thus directed toward corporate Israel in a generalising way. This is not unlike Isaiah’s own rebuke to God’s people.

The problem Luke brings into focus is a *corporate* one. Paul’s audience is in disagreement (28:24, 25).¹⁷¹ It is ‘disagreement with another’ that is emphasised in verse 25 (note the placement of *ἀσύμφωνοι* at the front of the sentence). The spotlight is not *only* on those who reject Paul’s message but on the whole audience as

¹⁶⁹ Luke Timothy Johnson, *Luke*, 475; Sanders, *The Jews*, 298.

¹⁷⁰ Witherington, *Acts*, 803; Richard J. Cassidy, *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987), 130: “...it would seem that Paul’s indictment actually falls only upon those who steadfastly ‘refuse to believe’ his proclamation.”

¹⁷¹ Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary: 24:1–28:31*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 3750; Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 104.

representative of *a people* (cf. 28:26a).¹⁷² Corporately, then, Israel is depicted as failing to accept God's salvation, in spite of the fact that some Jews have converted in Rome, as many other Jews have all along the way.¹⁷³ The early positive response of Jews in Jerusalem to the gospel seems promising (2:37–47).¹⁷⁴ In fact, Peter's second sermon implies that, given a corporate repentance of Israel, the Messiah would return and restore all things (3:19–21).¹⁷⁵ But from 4:1, conflict with the religious leaders begins to escalate, not unlike the ministry of Jesus.¹⁷⁶ By the end of Acts, the corporate repentance of Israel is no longer in view (though it is not explicitly denied).¹⁷⁷ Here, as well as in Acts 13:43ff. and 17:4ff., in spite of Jewish conversion, blanket generalisations are made about the Jewish people. So although some of the Jews in Rome believe, the rejection of the gospel by a significant part of the group represents, it seems, Israel's corporate failure to accept the gospel.¹⁷⁸

4.2.2.3 Parallel Passages Depicting Jewish Rejection

Some scholars suggest that parallel passages that depict Jewish rejection do not indicate Jewish conversion, and so neither should Jewish conversion be seen in Acts 28. Haenchen, for example, says, “In ἐπείθοντο there is no thought of a real

¹⁷² As Alexander rightly notes, Acts 28 is about the Jewish people, not Rome (*Literary Context*, 215); Pervo, *Acts*, 684–85.

¹⁷³ An illustrative example of how Luke can generalise about the Jews is in Acts 14. In 14:1, a “large number of people believed, both among Jews and among Greeks.” But the next verse refers to “the Jews who disbelieved” (14:2), and by 14:4, this group is simply called “the Jews.”

¹⁷⁴ Jervell highlights “mass conversions” of Jews through Acts 21:20 and takes this as evidence against the notion that Luke wishes to emphasise Jewish rejection of the gospel (*Luke and the People*, 44). Jervell's conception of God's people will be engaged more substantially below.

¹⁷⁵ Pervo, *Acts*, 107–8.

¹⁷⁶ See section 4.1.3 above.

¹⁷⁷ The issue of Israel's future repentance will be taken up again, below. For a discussion of the issues, along with a defense that a future repentance for Israel is left open, see Bock, *Theology*, 285–89; cf. Wolter, “Israel's Future”; For the possible allusion to Isa 65 and Israel's future, see Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*, 359–62.

¹⁷⁸ N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 375; Pervo, *Acts*, 684–85; contra Keener, *Acts*, 4:3750; Pao argues that the Jewish rejection creates a dramatic reversal of the expectations of the Isaianic New Exodus set out in Luke 3 (*Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*).

conversion any more than in the similar scene at 23:9.”¹⁷⁹ But there are too many differences between Acts 23 and Acts 28 to read the latter in light of the former.¹⁸⁰ Sanders offers a more compelling parallel in Acts 13:43, but his interpretation of that verse appears skewed to support his overall thesis that Luke has an anti-Semitic perspective. For example, he interprets the phrase ‘remain in the grace of God’ as an ironic exhortation for the Jews to ‘remain good Jews’.¹⁸¹ This completely overlooks how the ‘grace of God’ is used in Acts to refer to the gospel (Acts 11:23; esp. 20:24 ‘gospel of the grace of God’; cf. 20:32 ‘the word of his grace’). Further, in 14:22, Paul and Barnabas exhort new converts in a strikingly similar way, ‘to continue in the faith’.¹⁸² Thus 13:43 actually implies that conversion happened among Jews and Gentiles, and this fact only offers further support to seeing conversion in Acts 28:24. One is left, then, with Acts 18:4–5, a passage that does indicate complete (or near complete) Jewish rejection in Corinth. But given the divided responses elsewhere, this passage should not be decisive in the matter.

4.2.3 Acts 28:25b–28, Isaiah 6:9–10, and the Rhetoric of Perception.

As argued above, Acts 28:25b–28 are Paul’s words directed to his entire audience, representing corporate Israel, even though some in the audience had converted. Paul’s ‘word’ begins with his introduction of the Isaiah citation: “The Holy Spirit spoke well through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying...”. Identifying the speaker as the Spirit and the prophet as the agent only underscores the authority of the words. In two parallel passages, as here, the emphasis is on the *present* fulfilment

¹⁷⁹ Haenchen, *Acts*, 723.

¹⁸⁰ In Acts 23, Paul has been brought before the Council to answer their charges, not evangelise. Further, the Pharisees’ defense of Paul in 23:9 does not imply they accept Paul’s message.

¹⁸¹ Sanders, *The Jews*, 261–62.

¹⁸² In 14:22, the verb ἐμμένω is used instead of προσμένω.

of Scripture (cf. Acts 1:16; 4:25).¹⁸³ The recipients of Isaiah's words, according to Paul, are 'your fathers', a phrase that distances Paul from his audience. It is common in the Prophets for God to refer to the sins of 'your fathers'.¹⁸⁴ In Luke-Acts, Jewish speakers with a Jewish audience use 'your fathers' positively once and negatively five times, including this passage.¹⁸⁵ Similar references to 'our fathers' are positive, with one exception (Acts 7:39).¹⁸⁶ The irony of having a Jewish preacher prophetically condemn his 'people' is not lost on Luke, even if the author is a Gentile, living in a time when the church has become predominately Gentile.¹⁸⁷ Paul, like Isaiah, prophesies against the people corporately.¹⁸⁸

Paul next quotes Isaiah 6:9–10, a passage that emphasises the obduracy of God's people with metaphors for understanding, as was made clear in the examination of the Parable of the Sower.¹⁸⁹ In view of Luke's abbreviated quotation in Luke 8:10, it is possible that Luke "...has been saving up this quotation as the climax to the repeated theme that Paul was opposed by the Jews, but found a better

¹⁸³ Bonnah suggests that the Holy Spirit's inspiration of Scripture in 1:16 and 28:25 forms an *inclusio* in Acts that the narrator uses to legitimate his narrative; *The Holy Spirit: A Narrative Factor in the Acts of the Apostles*, SBB 58 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholishes Bibelwerk, 2007), 264–66.

¹⁸⁴ E.g., Zech 1:2, 4–6; 8:14; Mal 3:7; Isa 43:27; Jer 2:5; 16:11–13; 17:22; 51:9; Ezek 20:18, 27, 30, 36.

¹⁸⁵ Positively: Acts 3:25. Negatively: Luke 11:47, 48; Acts 7:51, 52; 28:25.

¹⁸⁶ The prophets sometimes recall the sins of 'our fathers' in intercessory prayer/confession (Jer 3:25; 14:20; 16:19; Lam 5:7; Dan 3:28; 9:6, 8, 16), clearly not the case at the end of Acts.

¹⁸⁷ I have not taken a position on the ethnicity of the author in this thesis.

¹⁸⁸ Troftgruben, while taking what I consider a maximally positive interpretation of Acts 28:25b–28 as it concerns the Jewish people, rightly puts this passage in the context of "prophetic critique" (*Conclusion*, 127–28); Cf. Mary C. Callaway, "A Hammer That Breaks Rock in Pieces: Prophetic Critique in the Hebrew Bible," in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, ed. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 21–38.

¹⁸⁹ The quotation does not differ in any significant way from known LXX manuscripts. For a detailed discussion of the passage, see Gert J. Steyn, *Septuagint Quotations in the Context of the Petrine and the Pauline Speeches of the Acta Apostolorum*, CBET 12 (Kampen: Pharos, 1995), 223–25. The LXX differs from the MT in more significant ways, but these differences seem irrelevant to our study since our author draws from the LXX and it cannot be shown that he was aware of Isa 6:9–10 in the MT.

hearing amongst the Gentiles.”¹⁹⁰ This fits with its significant location at the end of Acts, as well as the themes from the Parable of the Sower and its context.¹⁹¹ In fact, a number of threads of the rhetoric of perception in Luke-Acts here come together again. In Luke 2:30–32, Simeon says, “My eyes have *seen* your salvation...a light of *revelation* to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”¹⁹² Nevertheless, Simeon warned Mary of the divided response to the Messiah (Luke 2:34–35), demonstrated now in Rome (Acts 28:24). Quoting Isaiah 40:5, Luke 3:6 says, “All flesh will *see* the salvation of God.” Momentarily, Paul will claim that the Gentiles ‘will listen’ (Acts 28:28).¹⁹³ In the Nazareth synagogue Jesus claims that Isaiah 61:1 is fulfilled, implying he is the one anointed to proclaim ‘recovery of *sight* to the blind’ (Luke 4:18–21; cf. 7:22). Now, Paul’s listeners have closed their eyes (28:26). Sight and blindness and light and darkness metaphors are likewise related to salvation in Acts 26:18, where Paul’s purpose given by Jesus is “...to open their eyes, to turn from darkness to light...” (cf. Luke 1:79; 10:23–24; Acts 13:47). In contrast to such illumination, the faculties of perception are sometimes *prevented* from comprehending the good news (8:10–15; 9:44–45; 18:34; 19:42; Acts 28:26–27; cf. Luke 8:10; Acts 28:26–27). These themes are illustrated by the Emmaus disciples, whose eyes are ‘seized’ (Luke 24:16) but later ‘opened’ (24:31) to recognise Jesus. The opening of their eyes is linked to Jesus’ exposition of the Scripture by the use of *διανοίγω* in 24:31, 32 (cf. 24:27; 24:45).¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Barnabas Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 164.

¹⁹¹ Cf. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 109.

¹⁹² Note also the occurrence of *τὸ σωτήριον*.

¹⁹³ Contrast Paul’s Jewish audience’s original desire to ‘listen’ (with *ἀκούω* in 28:22).

¹⁹⁴ I have elsewhere argued for an “opening” motif in Luke-Acts related to the theme of ignorance and illumination (Mann, “Opening”). <http://www.bnts.org.uk/groups/book-acts/2013-book-acts>.

In Acts 28:26, the irony in the first part of the quotation is that although Israel can hear and see, they do not understand. The explanation follows: “For the heart of this people has been made dull; and their ears hear with difficulty; and they have closed their eyes” (Acts 28:27a/Isa 6:10a). The Parable of the Sower emphasised how the character of the heart was instrumental for perception (Luke 8:15). In Luke-Acts, the hearts and minds of both Jews and Gentiles are also *opened* by divine intervention in order to understand. Recall that the disciples do not understand Jesus’ suffering and resurrection in light of the Scriptures until he ‘open[s] their mind to understand the Scriptures’ (Luke 24:45).¹⁹⁵ Consider, too, how Lydia’s ‘heart’ is ‘opened’ to respond to Paul’s preaching (Acts 16:14). But in Acts 28:27, the heart is made dull (lit. ‘fat’). The passive voice of the verb ἐπαχύνθη may imply God’s agency, especially in view of similar uses of passive verbs to depict a kind of hardening or concealment of knowledge (Luke 9:45; 18:34; 19:42; cf. Luke 1:77 where God *grants* knowledge of salvation). Barrett entertains this possibility but claims, “...there is nothing to indicate that this is what Luke intends.”¹⁹⁶ Barrett overlooks earlier instances of the obduracy theme (e.g., Luke 8:10; 10:21–24). In addition, note the emphasis on God’s plan involving the role of Israel in Jesus’ death (2:23; 4:27–28) alongside Israel’s ignorance and the scriptural necessity of Christ’s suffering (3:17–18; 4:24–26; 13:27–29, 41; cf. Luke 19:41–44). A negative response to the gospel by at least some in Israel, especially among the religious leaders, is anticipated early and often in the Gospel (Luke 2:34–35; 3:16–17; 4:14–30; 8:10;

¹⁹⁵ As noted in earlier discussion, this illumination appeared to be particularly connected with the concealment that was peculiar to the disciples and the timing of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Nevertheless, the characterisation of God in those events is congruent with the general notion of divine involvement in the perception of the people.

¹⁹⁶ Barrett, *Acts XV–XXVIII*, 2:1245.

9:5, 23, 45; 10: 10:10; 11:32; 12:49–53; etc.).¹⁹⁷ Thus Luke presents the audience with many reasons to read the passive in Acts 28:27 as a divine passive. Along this line Haenchen says of this passage, “God has hardened the Jews’ hearts; salvation is now for the Gentiles, and ‘they will listen’.”¹⁹⁸ But remember from the earlier discussion of the obduracy theme found in Israel’s Scriptures that even God’s hardening of his people as judgment gives way to ‘restoration, in which perception returns’.¹⁹⁹

If God is the implied agent of ἐπαχύνθη, then the difficulty of hearing that follows (καὶ τοῖς ὡσὶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν) may be a result of the hardening. In contrast, the third phrase depicts the action of closing their eyes in the active voice, which implies an act of their own volition (τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμυσαν). Such tensions between God’s actions and sovereignty, human volition, and human culpability are at home in Luke-Acts, as has been shown.²⁰⁰

The final part of the quotation in 28:27 offers a negative purpose (μήποτε) which reverses the heart–ears–eyes sequence in chiasmic fashion: “...lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and repent, and I will heal them.” Some scholars find a glimpse of hope for Israel in translating μήποτε in its softer sense (‘perhaps’) and noting that the future indicative ἰάσομαι (‘I

¹⁹⁷ Wilson rightly notes instances in Luke’s Gospel where the Jewish people (typically in contrast to the leaders) are depicted as receptive with the rhetoric of hearing, particularly Luke 19:48 (on which see section 4.5.2 above) and 21:38 (Wilson, “Hearing the Word,” 19 n. 75). The other instances she lists are less significant, however, as ἀκούω and its cognates often do not carry the connotation of receptivity of understanding.

¹⁹⁸ Haenchen, *Acts*, 729; cf. Joachim Gnllka, *Die Verstockung Israels: Isaias 6, 9–10 in der Theologie der Synoptiker* (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1961).

¹⁹⁹ Evans, *To See and Not Perceive*, 46; cf. Wolter, “Israel’s Future,” 312.

²⁰⁰ E.g., Luke 8:10; 9:45; 18:34; 19:42; Acts 2:23; 3:17–18; 4:26–28; 13:27–29, 41. See also discussions above in the examination of Luke 8–9.

will heal...’) is more hopeful than the MT (וְרָפָא).²⁰¹ But it seems difficult to show that the sense ‘perhaps’ is any more probable than ‘lest’ for μήποτε, and there is no evidence that Luke or his audience were aware of the MT. Troftgruben offers the possibility that Paul’s rebuke is ‘aimed at bringing about the repentance of hearers’.²⁰² Given Luke’s characterisation of Paul, it seems reasonable to assume ‘Paul’ would wish his hearers to repent, just as Isaiah presumably did. Schaefer sees the larger scene—Paul preaching ‘morning to evening’ to a hardened audience—as alluding to Isaiah 65:1–8, where in 65:2 the Lord says, “I stretched out my hands all day long,” and in 65:8 a faithful person to whom God will show mercy is likened to a good grape in a cluster.²⁰³ The issue of Israel’s future will be revisited below. Note, however, that the *actual* response emphasised in the narrative—the disagreement, the departure, the rebuke—sets the tone of 28:25–28, and it is not optimistic (cf. Luke 19:41–44).²⁰⁴ Further, this negative response is the basis for the sending of salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28).²⁰⁵

The culmination of Paul’s ‘word’ that began in 28:25b is reached in 28:28: “...to the Gentiles this salvation of God has been sent; and they will listen.” Schaefer argues that the καί in the final clause is “nicht antithetisch, sondern korrespondierend (,und‘ / ,auch‘),” and so, “...they *also* will listen.”²⁰⁶ But this misses the play on the hearing metaphors from Isaiah 6:9–10 where *to listen* is *to understand*. The audience

²⁰¹ Witherington, *Acts*, 804–5; For others finding hope in the future verb, see Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 128 n. 59; cf. Kilgallen’s positive interpretation of the passage, especially based on his interpretation of 28:28 (“Acts 28,28--Why?,” *Biblica* 90.2 [2009]: 176–87).

²⁰² Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 127–28.

²⁰³ Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*, 361–62.

²⁰⁴ Johnson is probably right when he says, “...do we have another instance of the ‘divided people of God’, so that even among these Jewish leaders of Rome there is a realization of the restored people? Perhaps, but the fact that they all leave while ‘disagreeing with each other’ (28:25) holds out only minimal hope.” *Luke*, 475.

²⁰⁵ The οὐν in v. 28 makes this clear enough (cf. 13:46; 18:6).

²⁰⁶ Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*, 357.

is rebuked for *not* listening, that is for not understanding. Recall the culminating imperative of the Parable of the Sower: “Watch how you listen” (Luke 8:18).

Acts 28:28 raises the question: What is the nature of Israel’s future according to Luke-Acts? There is little reason to think individual Jews will not continue to convert, for even in the narrative’s final place of rejection, some did (28:24).²⁰⁷ However, beyond this it is difficult to be certain, as the discussion above has indicated.²⁰⁸ Consider first that this may be the wrong question altogether.²⁰⁹ In fact, thinking at the end of Acts in terms of a ‘Gentile mission’ or ‘Jewish mission’, which might seem appropriate to the two parallel ‘turning’ passages where *missionaries* turn to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46; 18:6), may not be appropriate in Acts 28:28 where it is *salvation*, not a missionary, that *has been sent* (ἀπεστάλη) to the Gentiles (cf. 13:26).²¹⁰ Probably ἀπεστάλη is a divine passive, indicating God is the agent of sending.²¹¹ It has been well noted that τὸ σωτήριον is only used three times in Luke-Acts in thematically similar passages. In Luke 2:30, Simeon, having now seen ‘the

²⁰⁷ In spite of the negative tone in Acts 28, there are subtle hints in the narrative that a Jewish response in the future is not foreclosed: (1) Paul declares he had ‘no charge to bring against my nation’ (28:19); (2) He equates his mission with the ‘hope of Israel’ (28:20); (3) The Roman Jews are initially open-minded (28:22); (4) The Roman Jews sat under Paul’s teaching all day (28:23); (5) Some were persuaded/converted (28:24); (6) The Isaiah quotation mentions God’s mercy; (7) Acts 28:30–31 is ambiguous as to Jewish reception of the gospel; (8) A remnant theology may be implicit in the narrative, especially if the eschatological position of Peter in Acts 3 is taken as representing the author’s theology.

²⁰⁸ As Wolter notes, “The difficulty in reaching a consensus in this question derives not only from the lack of interpretive consensus regarding the pertinent texts themselves, but also from the texts’ inclination to point the interpreter in different directions” (“Israel’s Future,” 308).

²⁰⁹ Or at least imprecise.

²¹⁰ A simple explanation would be that a missionary cannot be sent, for the missionary (Paul) has become stationary. But this is not the first time Paul has been stationary in the narrative. Dupont, for example, points out parallels with Acts 18:11 and 19:10 (“La conclusion des Actes et son rapport à l’ensemble de l’ouvrage de Luc,” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer, BETL 48 [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979], 361 n. 9).

²¹¹ It is interesting that the aorist is used and not the present or future (e.g., “this salvation is now being sent” or “this salvation will be now be sent”). It may simply indicate completed action, that the “deal is done”. Jervell finds it appropriate since this is not the first time the gospel has gone to the Gentiles (*Luke and the People*, 63). In any case, the future ἀκούσονται anticipates evangelistic activity to come.

Lord's Messiah' (2:26) says, "My eyes have seen your salvation (τὸ σωτήριον), which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation for the Gentiles and glory for your people, Israel" (2:30–32). Consider also the quotation from Isaiah 40:3–5, the last line of which is, "And all flesh will see the salvation of God (τὸ σωτήριον τοῦ θεοῦ)." Alexander helpfully describes the connections, along with possible intertexts, all of which support the importance of the rhetoric of perception in the narrative:

Paul's use of the rare word τὸ σωτήριον at 28.28 sets up multiple intertextual links with a cluster of texts which speak of the 'knowledge' of God's salvation 'among the Gentiles' and at 'all the bounds of the earth': cf. Ps. 66.3 LXX and 97.3 LXX. The citation of Isa. 49.6 at Acts 13.47 reinforces the links between 'salvation' (here σωτηρία) and 'the end of the earth' with 'light to the Gentiles' (φῶς ἐθνῶν). This latter is a key concept for the self-understanding of the apostle as it is presented in Acts: cf. especially 26.18, which picks up the theme of 'light to the Gentiles' from Isa. 42.7, where it is combined with the 'eyes of the blind' motif.... But, as we have seen, both terms, 'salvation' and 'light to the Gentiles', are anticipated in the Gospel prologue in Simeon's song (Lk. 2.32). ...the Isaiah 6 passage cited at the end of Acts makes it clear that it is possible to have 'eyes' and yet fail to 'see': and this is indeed the tragedy of the story Luke unfolds."²¹²

Through metaphors for perception, the three σωτήριον passages emphasise the realisation or acceptance of God's salvation, not missionary activity per se.

Since the 'salvation of God' was a light for Gentiles *and* glory for Israel in Luke 2:30–32 and seen by 'all flesh' in Luke 3:6, it seems that Acts 28:28 either reverses the expectation in a rather surprising manner (passing salvation like a ball from the Jews to the Gentiles, where possession lost by one means gain for another)²¹³ or else vindicates it by underscoring that the Gentiles have access (while not thereby excluding all Jewish access).²¹⁴ The former interpretation is less likely in

²¹² Alexander, *Literary Context*, 221; On the idea of a tragic ending, see Tannehill, "Israel."

²¹³ Cf. the "dramatic reversal" of Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus*, 105–9.

²¹⁴ As argued in Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 41–74.

light of Jewish acceptance of the gospel throughout Acts, especially in this narrative (Acts 28:24).²¹⁵ It is worth noting that the apostle Paul argues along a similar line, that Israel's hardening has resulted in Gentile access to the gospel (esp. Rom 11:7–10, 11, 25, 30).²¹⁶ Yet Paul does not discount the possibility of Jewish conversion, it seems, even in his own time (Rom 11:1, 12, 14–15, 23, 25, 31).²¹⁷ Both Luke and Paul seem to be thinking in corporate and generalising terms, theologising in reaction to a similar situation in which many more Gentiles than Jews are coming to faith.²¹⁸ And so it is reasonable to think that Luke is reacting to what *has* happened, not prescribing what *can* or *will* happen.²¹⁹

Indeed, there is more than one way to construe the implications of these observations as the chart of scholarly positions shows (above). For example, for Jervell, Jews who reject the gospel are no longer part of 'true Israel' in Luke's schema (i.e., they have been cut-off as per Acts 3:23).²²⁰ What Jervell calls 'empirical Israel' (i.e., ethnic Israel) is made up of both Jews who will believe the gospel and those who will reject it. The primary mission in Acts, then, is to the Jews *first*, to 'purge' the unrepentant Jews after which the mission of the Gentiles can be opened (cf. Acts 3:26; 15:13–18).²²¹ Thus the people of God were, are, and will be

²¹⁵ Wolter, "Israel's Future," 319.

²¹⁶ Paul's larger concern seems to be the fidelity of God to his promises (Rom 11:1). Cf. Johnson's view that the purpose of Acts is to show God's fidelity to his promises in light of Jewish rejection of the gospel. *Luke*, 476; For a comparison of Luke's theology with Paul's in Romans 9–11, see Secombe, "New People of God."

²¹⁷ For a comparison of Luke and Paul on the subject of Israel's future, see Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*.

²¹⁸ Although this 'situation' might well be Paul's 'present' whereas Luke is looking back on it.

²¹⁹ Schaefer sees Acts 28 as a bridge that brings the reader to the state of the church in Luke's day, a church that has separated from the synagogue; Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*, 357–58.

²²⁰ Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 41–74.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 64. Jervell also states this positively: "It is more correct to say that only when Israel has accepted the gospel can the way to Gentiles be opened" (64–65); With Keener, I would rather see the raising of David's house in Acts 15:16–17 as already completed in Jesus' enthronement and the basis of the Gentile mission. Further, the restoration of Israel will not be completed until the Messiah returns (cf. Acts 1:6–7, 11) (*Acts*, 3:2257).

Israel, *true* Israel. Repentant Jews are the ‘cornerstone’ of the true Israel into which believing Gentiles have now been incorporated.²²² In this way, Jervell can also say that Acts 28 brings to a close the mission to the Jews: “...Luke has excluded the possibility of a further mission to the Jews for the church of his time because the judgment by and on the Jews has been irrevocably passed.”²²³ While the seamlessness of Jervell’s position is attractive, he is too quick to smooth over the severity of the rhetoric in passages depicting Jewish rejection (discussed below).²²⁴ Compare Sanders, who agrees with Jervell that Acts 28 depicts a final offer to the Jews and that Isaiah 6:9–10 applies to the Jews corporately.²²⁵ Yet Sanders finds the earlier rejection passages programmatic, indicative of the anti-Judaism of the author, who even depicts Jewish ‘Christians’ in a negative light.²²⁶

Along these lines Wolter offers an interesting perspective. He, too, considers how both Paul and Luke appear to use the obduracy motif to explain Jewish rejection of the gospel (and he rightly warns against allowing a ‘Pauline exposition’ to dictate).²²⁷ Herein lies Wolter’s advance: Paul and Luke are separated by more than three decades, and so the hope of Israel’s restoration that was in Paul’s *present* (Rom 9–11) is long in Luke’s *past*. Paul’s generation of potential Jewish converts had died without converting.²²⁸ Luke (and his audience) is thus dealing with the delay of the parousia (cf. Luke 19:11; 24:21; Acts 1:6), at once knowing that the obduracy of

²²² Jervell, *Luke and the People*, 64.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Essentially, my reading diverges from Jervell’s in two key respects: (1) I think that the Isaiah 6:9–10 quotation is applied *beyond* just unrepentant Jews (primarily because it is the disagreement of the group, not just the fact of partial rejection, that is emphasised, therefore the *entire* group is the target of the rebuke); and (2) Luke-Acts does not give us the categories we need to speak confidently of a ‘true Israel’ contrasted with ‘empirical Israel’, Acts 3:23 notwithstanding.

²²⁵ Sanders, *The Jews*, 298–99.

²²⁶ Ibid., 297–99, 303.

²²⁷ Wolter, “Israel’s Future,” 316–17.

²²⁸ Ibid., 316–20.

many Jews in Paul's day can never be reversed (hence Acts 28:24–28) and yet not knowing when that restoration may yet happen (hence Acts 1:6). Crucial for Wolter's argument is establishing that Luke-Acts envisions Israel's future restoration beyond Acts 28, a notion he finds supported in the infancy narratives (Luke 1:68–75; 2:29–32, 38), but modified in light of the delayed parousia via Jesus' interlocutors in Luke 19:11, 24:21, and Acts 1:6.²²⁹ Thus Israel's 'times of refreshing' (καιροὶ ἀναψύξεως) (Acts 3:20) is not hypothetical but will be fulfilled at Jesus' parousia, as will the liberation of Israel and Jerusalem, the restoration of the βασιλείαν to Israel (Acts 1:6).²³⁰ In this light, Wolter reads Paul's quotation of Habakkuk 1:5 at Pisidian Antioch as an expression of the very tension with which Luke is dealing, that is to explain the *fact* of historical Jewish obduracy of the apostolic period while holding onto the Scriptural promises of Israel's future.²³¹

Wolter's is a bold thesis, but one that is nevertheless supported in a number of ways by the observations in this thesis. It has been shown, for example, that the rhetoric of perception is used to explain widespread Jewish misunderstanding and rejection of (the message of) Jesus and the apostles. Similarly, Luke appears to use the scheme of divine concealment and disclosure to explain the fact of the disciples' misunderstanding during Jesus' ministry, inherited from Mark, while ensuring the credibility of the disciples as faithful witnesses after the resurrection. That God features at the centre of characters' perception also secures the inevitability of not only the success of the gospel, but its rejection, even if retrospectively. Finally, it was seen that knowledge of the timing of eschatological events is, according to

²²⁹ Ibid., 323.

²³⁰ Ibid., esp. 323.

²³¹ Ibid., 320–24 (esp. 234).

Jesus, unattainable even for the apostles (esp. Acts 1:7), and irrespective of the desire to ‘see’ one of the days of the Son of Man (Luke 17:22, 23), his ‘revelation’ (17:30) will be obvious when it does occur, like lightening (17:24). Since some of the historical arguments relevant to further evaluating Wolter’s proposal lie outside the method utilised in this thesis, those will not be discussed further here.

It is sufficient at this stage to note, in summary, that the Isaiah quotation leveled by Paul at his divided audience is consistent with the rhetoric of perception in Luke-Acts and serves to explain Jewish rejection of the gospel in Scriptural terms. This rejection is not the final note of Acts, however. It is to this brief finale that the next section attends.

4.2.4 The Nature of the Evangelism Presented in Acts 28:30–31.

The final two verses of Acts summarise Paul’s two years in Rome, notably that he “...was welcoming all those coming to him...preaching and teaching with all boldness, unhindered.” Similar to 28:23, the first verb in the sentence is an aorist (Ἐνέμεινεν), ‘he stayed two full years...’, followed by an imperfect (ἀπεδέχετο) with modifying participles (κηρύσσων...καὶ διδάσκων) that describe Paul’s activity from an internal, durative perspective.²³² These summary verses provide a contrast to the negative tone of the immediately preceding scene. In spite of being confined under arrest, Paul is able to continue preaching and teaching. A key thematic emphasis is on the openness of Paul’s evangelistic activity, both in terms of whom he welcomes (πάντας) and in terms of the absence of resistance (ἀκωλύτως). This openness implies both that the Jews who rejected the gospel (recently in Rome as well as earlier in the narrative) did not subsequently oppose Paul in Rome and also that any person who

²³² As rightly noted by Troftgruben, *Conclusion*, 140–41.

wished to come to Paul would be welcomed regardless of ethnicity. Even so, it is doubtful given the previous passage that Luke wishes his audience to envision a balanced ministry to Jews and Gentiles in 28:30–31.²³³ Such concerns probably expect too much from the final lines of Acts.²³⁴ The function of the final summary seems to be to emphasise the faithfulness of Paul and encapsulate the activity of apostolic proclamation.²³⁵ Given the framing effect of these verses with Acts 1:3 (with reference to teaching concerning ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ), Acts 28:30–31 may connect as much or more to the whole narrative of Acts than with the scene just preceding.²³⁶ In this way, Luke brings to a close his two volume work, emphasising for the audience the continual advance of the gospel in spite of opposition.

4.2.5 Synthesis of Acts 28:16–31

It has been argued that Acts 28:16–28 emphasises the divided response of Jews in Rome to Paul’s preaching. Some converted, others did not (v. 24). The division in Paul’s audience represents the failure of Israel to repent corporately, and for this reason Paul rebukes them (24:25–28). Luke emphasises that such a divided response is in accordance with God’s promises in the Scriptures (28:25–26). In the citation of Isaiah 6:9–10, picking up on the rhetoric of perception present throughout Luke-

²³³ Troftgruben is too optimistic, *ibid.*, 139; As is Robert L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation*, SBLMS 33 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 77; and likely Wolter, “Israel’s Future,” 323; Haenchen is too pessimistic, *Acts*, 726; A more balanced perspective is offered in Schaefer, *Die Zukunft Israels*, 358.

²³⁴ Troftgruben offers a balanced perspective in *Conclusion*, 152–53.

²³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 172–78; Troftgruben rightly notes ways in which the summary ending provides closure (148–49), but goes too far in his attempt to demonstrate the openness of the ending. He ultimately sees the ending of Acts as functioning as “a link to an expansive saga,” particularly because he sees Paul’s fate and Israel’s response to salvation as anticipated but not narrated in the story (177; cf. 172–178). In my reading, however, Israel’s response is clear enough at the end of Acts; Further, in light of Adams’ compelling work on the genre of Acts as collected biography, such a summary that focuses on Paul’s faithfulness seems appropriate (Sean A. Adams, *The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography*, SNTSMS 156 [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013]).

²³⁶ These are not necessarily mutually exclusive options. On the inclusio see Pervo, *Acts*, 687; Alexander, *Literary Context*, 221, follows Dupont in also noting links between Luke 1–4 and Acts 28; Dupont, “La conclusion.”

Acts, the narrative suggests that Israel has corporately closed its eyes and perhaps been hardened by God (28:27). Similar divine intervention is found in key places in the Gospel (Luke 8:10; 9:45; 10:21; 18:34; 19:41–44; Cf. Acts 2:22), and its counterpart is God’s illuminating work of salvation seen throughout Luke-Acts (Luke 1:77; 2:30–32; 4:18–19; 8:10; 24:45; 16:14; 26:18).²³⁷ It may be that the corporate rejection of Israel in Acts 28 is paradigm shifting, implying an emphasis on Gentile evangelism in the future. However, Luke does not elaborate on the future of the Jewish people, and the rhetoric of perception in the passage explains the rejection of the gospel whether or not it is ‘final’. Luke’s emphasis is that the corporate failure to repent, which is part of God’s plan, opens up Gentile access to salvation (28:28). The final verses in Acts summarise the remainder of Paul’s ministry while under arrest in Rome, emphasising his faithfulness as a witness and the openness of his preaching (28:30–31).

For the audience, the passage reinforces the faithfulness of Jesus’ witnesses to preach the kingdom, offering a positive model of witness. The solemn rebuke from Isaiah 6:9–10 amplifies the imperative in the Lukan passage it echoes, to listen carefully to the message of the kingdom (Luke 8:10, 18). Further, the audience is given a clear explanation for large-scale Jewish rejection of the gospel, which might reflect one of the central issues about which they need certainty. Further reflection on the significance of Acts 28 for the whole of Acts’ narrative will be offered in the chapter conclusion, below.

²³⁷ Squires highlights the extent to which God intervenes in the narrative (*Plan of God*).

4.3 Conclusion

The opening of Acts recalls the purpose statement of Luke 1:4—to help the audience ‘recognise the certainty concerning the things instructed’—not only by virtue of its preface, nebulous as it is, but in its thematic emphasis on the certainty of Jesus’ resurrection. The question of the disciples concerning the timing of the restoration of the kingdom (Acts 1:6) was judged to be an appropriate question in the context, and perhaps one that resonates with Luke’s audience. Jesus’ answer reaffirmed an earlier notion from the Third Gospel that knowledge of the timing of eschatological events is unattainable to anyone except the Father (Acts 1:7). Nevertheless, what the disciples do (now) understand, the significance and scriptural necessity of recent events concerning Jesus, is that to which they must bear Spirit-empowered witness.

When the Spirit comes soon after, Peter preaches to an audience of Jews in Jerusalem, arguing from Scripture that the manifestations of the Spirit are evidence that Jesus is at God’s right hand on the Davidic throne. His culminating imperative (ἀσφαλῶς οὖν γινωσκέτω) (Acts 2:36) echoes the Gospel’s preface (ἐπιγνῶς...τὴν ἀσφάλειαν) (Luke 1:4), reaffirming for the audience the centrality of being certain about this christological proposition, the heart of Lukan christology. Peter’s audience repents, being ‘pierced to the heart’ (Acts 2:37), and thereby becomes a positive model of perception for Luke’s audience. Peter’s second speech, on the same day, more or less repeats the main threads of the first (3:11–26). Peter emphasises the need to repent from deeds done in ignorance (3:17), to *heed* Jesus, the prophet-like-Moses (3:19, 22–23, 26). In the aftermath of the speech, the emphasis turns to conflict with the Jewish leaders, and thus the audience has the expected pattern of ministry that will play out through the rest of Acts.

In Stephen's speech, the rhetoric of perception was once again used to emphasise the spiritual misperceptions of Israel's leaders. Stephen accuses his audience of being 'uncircumcised in heart and ears' (7:51) and they prove him right when they 'close' their ears to the description of his vision of the Son of Man enthroned (7:57) and when they finally kill Stephen (7:59–60). Stephen's rehearsal of Israel's history hits a familiar note in Luke-Acts, that rejection of God's prophets has a strong scriptural precedent.

In the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, Luke draws attention to the significance of adhering to a trustworthy character's interpretation of Scripture. When the narrator quotes the Isaiah passage at length, it indicates once again the centre of his christology, the messianic suffering (Acts 8:32–33). The eunuch proves to be a positive model of perception, especially in the way he pursues an understanding of the Scriptures by inviting Philip to help him, not being afraid to ask a question (Acts 8:31, 34; cf. Luke 9:44). Parallels were found in the conversion of the Gentile, Cornelius, whose posture of listening (Acts 10:33) led way to conversion (10:47–48). In both of these accounts, the audience also finds that the likely non-Jewish character of the hearer does not present additional obstacles to perception. This is reinforced when Lydia, whose characterisation may indicate her questionable status, is converted (16:14–15). Significant in that context was the fact that the Lord *opened her heart* to respond to Paul, echoing the illumination of the Emmaus disciples and especially the gathered disciples, whose minds are opened by Jesus (Luke 24:45).

Finally, the rhetoric of perception was seen to play a central role in the narration of Paul's conversion and ministry. In the third account of his conversion,

Paul describes his ministry as one of illumination, ‘to open eyes’ (26:18). That calling came during his encounter with Jesus in which he is blinded (9:1–9). His spiritual blindness gives way to understanding, however, and he immediately begins preaching Jesus as the Messiah (9:22). In what was seen to be Paul’s paradigmatic speech at Pisidian Antioch, the rhetoric of perception was used to highlight the ignorance of Scripture of those who killed Jesus (13:27), as well as to warn the audience from Scripture to ‘watch’ (βλέπετε) and ‘see’ (ἴδετε) or be judged (13:40–41). The scriptural basis for judgment explains for the audience, then, the outcome of Paul’s ministry in the synagogue on the following week, in which many Jews oppose him (13:45–47). This conflict from fellow Jews, particularly from Asia, as well as the subsequent turning to the Gentiles in that area, become a pattern for Paul’s ministry (13:47–49).

The final scenes of Acts bring Paul to the capital city of the Empire, Rome, where he preaches to a group of Jews, most of whom appear to be leaders (28:17, 23). Some believe, others do not (28:24). The emphasis, however, is not on one group or the other, but on the group’s failure to repent corporately, representing Israel’s failure (28:25). *This* issue is the impetus of Paul’s rebuke from Isaiah 6:9–10, earlier abbreviated in the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8) but now quoted at length (Acts 28:26–27). In so doing, Luke explains once and for all that the failure of the Jewish people to embrace Jesus as the Messiah and repent *corporately* is in accordance with Scripture. Corporate failure results in Gentile access to salvation, however (28:28). Whether or not this penultimate note of Acts is indicative of Israel’s future is difficult to determine. Other hints in Luke-Acts suggest a future for Israel at the Messiah’s parousia (e.g., Acts 3:19–21). In any case, the final note of

Acts is a positive one, emphasising the openness of Paul's preaching. The audience can be sure, then, that the gospel continues to be proclaimed by the Messiah's faithful witnesses, and that opposition to it has precedent in Scripture, wherein is written, too, the necessity of the Messiah's death and resurrection, and the mission of preaching repentance in his name (Luke 24:44–49; Acts 1:8). Of this they must 'recognise the certainty' by listening carefully.

5 Conclusion

This thesis has examined the rhetoric of perception inductively through the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts in order to answer the question, *How does the rhetoric of perception contribute to the meaning of Luke-Acts?* Previous chapter conclusions offer overviews of how the rhetoric develops over the course of the narrative, section by section. Now the major threads of the analysis will be summarised.

Broadly, the rhetoric of perception in Luke-Acts is used for the very purpose indicated by its first occurrence, in the purpose statement of Luke 1:4: in order to bring the audience to ‘recognise the certainty’ concerning the events narrated, the centre of which is the scripturally necessary death and resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah, and the subsequent mission to preach repentance in his name by his chosen witnesses.

Specifically, conflicts involving perception drive the plot forward and become a rhetorical strategy whereby Luke communicates his christology.¹ There are two primary ways this works out. First, Luke creates suspense by characterising the disciples as insiders with special knowledge (e.g., Luke 8:10; 9:20; 10:21–24) alongside their failure to understand the scriptural necessity of the Messiah’s death and resurrection (Luke 9:45; 18:34). The suspense continues even after Jesus is resurrected and it is ultimately resolved only when Jesus opens the disciples’ mind to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). In these dramatic moments where perception looms large, Luke hardly ever fails to mention the scriptural necessity of messianic suffering (esp. Luke 18:34; 24:7, 26, 46). Second, in the depiction of a more general

¹ Rightly, Frein, “Misunderstanding,” 346–48.

conflict of misunderstanding and rejection—introduced by Simeon in Luke 2:34–35 and depicted throughout Luke-Acts unto its penultimate scene (Acts 28:24–28)—Luke uses the rhetoric of perception to explain the rejection of Jesus and his witnesses. Again and again, the crucial obstacle to understanding that leads to rejection is at the same time the heart of Luke’s christology, the identification of Jesus as the suffering Messiah, written in the Scriptures. Supporting this general theme of (mis)understanding is the use of secondary characters whose perception or misperception is highlighted (e.g., Zechariah, Mary, Simeon, Herod, a blind beggar, Zacchaeus, a crucified criminal, an Ethiopian Eunuch, Cornelius, Lydia).²

At the same time, the rhetoric of perception allows Luke to explain two facts inherited from his source(s) and from history, with both of which his implied audience is likely familiar: (1) the disciples failed to fully understand Jesus during his ministry (cf. Luke 9:45/Mark 9:32; Luke 18:34/Mark 10:34); and (2) Jesus, his witnesses, and the gospel in his name have been largely rejected by the Jewish people. The solution to the first fact is to posit divine concealment: God conceals the truth of the scriptural messianic suffering from the disciples (Luke 9:45; 18:34) until it is reversed via illumination (Luke 24:45). The solution to the second fact is similar: Jewish rejection is shown to be part of God’s plan by offering scriptural precedent and warning, drawing on the obduracy motif familiar in Scripture (e.g., Luke 3:3–7; 8:10, 18; 19:41–44; Acts 3:22–24; 7:51–53; 13:40–41; 28:25–27). Thus rejection is presented as inevitable, anticipated in the same Scriptures in which the messianic suffering is written. In the examination of Acts 28:24–28, it was argued that what brings on the scriptural rebuke from Paul from Isaiah 6:9–10 is not

² Darr, *On Character Building*, 56.

rejection per se but division—the failure of the group to corporately repent, representing corporate Israel’s failure to repent. Further, evidence in Luke-Acts of a future consummation of the kingdom at Jesus’ parousia suggests that Israel’s future is not foreclosed at the end of the story.³ Using the rhetoric of perception, Luke theologises history through his Scriptures, and in so doing he harmonises the fulfilment of promises to Israel, Jesus’ identification as the Messiah and his suffering and resurrection, the rejection of the gospel by the Jewish people, and an eschatological consummation of the kingdom that, for Luke it seems, has not yet happened.⁴

To benefit his audience, Luke uses the rhetoric of perception to model good and bad hermeneutical routes that should be taken or avoided, in line with his purpose (Luke 1:4).⁵ This is often accomplished through drawing attention to the perception of secondary characters, especially through the use of the language of literal sense-perception to represent spiritual (mis)understanding (e.g., Luke 9:7–9; 18:35–45; 19:1–10; Acts 7:1–60; 9:1–10). A character’s hermeneutical journey, on which the audience is forced to travel, enables an evaluation from the author’s point

³ See the second part of the previous chapter for discussion.

⁴ While the narrative method employed by this thesis leaves too little room to dig further into the possible historical occasion for Luke’s writing, a brief venture will be taken: the rhetoric of perception gives the strong impression of apologetic, defensive especially of Luke’s central christological point and the inevitability of large scale Jewish rejection of the gospel. The way Luke handles Mark’s depiction of the disciples’ misunderstanding of Jesus, positing divine concealment and otherwise “softening” the Markan impression, has the similar effect of explaining how persons could misunderstand Jesus’ passion alongside his messianic identity. If these are the concerns of Luke’s audience, what might be their source? It would seem that the main religious perspective from which these christological questions would be asked is Jewish. If correct, it would seem that pressure is coming from the inside, perhaps from Jewish Christians in (proximity to) Luke’s audience, and/or from the outside, from Jewish unbelievers (cf. Robert L. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts*, SNTW [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982]); From this perspective, eschatological delay could still be a real concern for one or both groups—the delay of the parousia for Jewish Christians and delay of restoration for Jewish unbelievers after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Both “delays” could undermine the messianic claims about Jesus by Christians. For this reason, I find Wolter’s proposal, summarised in the previous chapter, intriguing (“Israel’s Future”).

⁵ With Darr, “Watch How You Listen,” 87.

of view of the validity of various beliefs, especially concerning Jesus. The questions characters ask are especially formative, and their rhetorical impact is most easily conveyed when the questions are brought together:

“Is this not Joseph’s son?” (Luke 4:22)

“Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins except God alone?” (5:21)

“Are you the coming one, or should we look for another?” (7:19, 20)

“Who is this who even forgives sins?” (7:49)

“Who then is this, that he commands the wind and the water, and they obey him?” (8:25)

“John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?” (9:9)

“Who do people say that I am?” (9:18)

“Who do you say that I am?” (9:20)

“If you are the Christ, tell us... Are you therefore the Son of God?” (22:67, 70)

“Are you the king of the Jews?” (23:1)

“Are you not the Messiah?” (23:39)

“Why do you seek the living one among the dead?” (24:5)

“Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter his glory?” (24:26)

“Why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your hearts?” (24:38)

“Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6)

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing into the sky?” (1:11)

“What does this [manifestation of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost] mean?” (2:12)

“Brothers, what should we do [in response to Peter’s preaching]?” (2:37)

“By what power or in what name did you do this [i.e. heal]?” (4:7)

“Do you understand what you are reading?” (8:30)

“How can I [understand the Scripture] unless someone guides me?” (8:31)

“Concerning whom does the prophet say this, himself or someone else?” (8:34)

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (16:30)

“May we know what this new teaching is that you are speaking?” (17:19)

“Who are you, Lord?” (22:8; 26:15)

“Why is it considered incredible among you if God raises the dead?” (26:8)

“King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets?” (26:27)

In encountering these questions and their correct answers given or otherwise implied in the story, the audience is encouraged to align with the author’s viewpoint, to recognise its certainty (Luke 1:4).

Also, the resounding imperative encountered throughout the narrative that resonates with the purpose for the audience to *know* is to *watch* and *listen* carefully, a point forcefully made in the context of the Parable of the Sower and the Lamp (esp. 8:10–18).⁶ But it recurs throughout:

“He who has ears let him hear.” (Luke 8:8)

“Watch how you listen.” (8:18)

“This is my chosen son, listen to him.” (9:35)

“Let these words sink into your ears.” (9:44)

“...sitting at the Lord’s feet [Mary] was listening to [Jesus’] words.” (10:39)

“If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded...” (16:31)

“They will say to you, ‘Look there, look here’. Do not pursue [it].” (17:23)

⁶ Darr, “Watch How You Listen.”

“Remember how he [Jesus] spoke...” (24:6)

“...let this be known to you and pay attention to my words.” (Acts 2:14)

“Men of Israel, listen to these words...” (2:22; cf. 7:2; 13:16; 15:13; 22:1)

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain...” (2:36)

“let it be known to all...” (4:10)

“Therefore watch lest what was spoken in the prophets comes about.” (13:40)

“Look, ...I am doing a work in your days—a work you will not believe even if someone tells you.” (13:41)

“...hearing you will hear and not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive...” (Acts 28:26–27)

“Therefore let it be known to you that to the Gentiles has been sent this salvation of God, and they will listen.” (28:28)

In short, by carefully listening to Luke, whose credibility is defended at the outset (Luke 1:1–4), and to the narrator, Jesus, other trustworthy characters, and above all the implied christological reading of the Scriptures, the audience will, Luke hopes, know and believe the story, with which they are already acquainted.

The rhetoric of perception serves to make other hermeneutical points, too. For example, while the narrative implicitly approves standard hermeneutical principles (such as verifying the credibility of an author as in Luke 1:1–4 or the evidence offered by Paul in his judicial speeches in Acts), there is a prominent place given to the *spiritual* dimension of understanding. This includes the way that the heart and mind relate to spiritual perception (e.g., Luke 8:15; 24:32; 24:45; Acts 2:37; 7:51; 16:14). The condition of the ‘heart’ is something one oversees (Luke 8:14–15; 21:34), but also a faculty of perception on which God acts (Acts 15:9; 16:14; cf. Luke 24:45; Acts 28:27). Little evidence was found that the rhetoric of perception implies the heart or mind of a person is congenitally flawed, nor that the

scheme of divine concealment affecting the disciples in the Third Gospel is understood by Luke as normative.⁷ Rather, in keeping with scriptural notions of obduracy, such a condition is brought on by a person's own misdeeds or by God himself, often as a judgment (i.e., a 'giving over' to blindness).⁸

Even if the concealment preventing the disciples' understanding in Luke is not normative, the general notion that God reveals and illumines *is* for Luke, reinforcing the spiritual dimension to perception. This is illustrated by the way in which Luke depicts the disciples' progressive understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection in Luke 24. It was argued that Luke reserves any explicit indication of faith and understanding of that which was earlier concealed, the scriptural necessity of the messianic suffering, until Luke 24:45. Because the disciples seem to fully understand only when Jesus opens their minds, the narrative implies that the brute facts of the empty tomb and even the sight of Jesus himself was not the complete solution to understanding.⁹ This suggests for the audience, then, that their understanding of the crucial events of salvation history narrated by Luke is dependent, in part at least, on God. This theological implication and the tension it creates with human freedom and culpability is at home in Luke-Acts (and Luke's Scriptures). God is found granting knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom (Luke 8:10), hiding truth from the wise and understanding while revealing it to 'children' (10:21), mediating knowledge of himself through Jesus (10:22), and foreordaining Jesus' death and the various actors involved (Acts 2:23; 4:24–29) *while at the same*

⁷ Contra Donald E. Hartley, *The Wisdom Background and Parabolic Implications of Isaiah 6:9–10 in the Synoptics*, StBibLit 100 (New York: Peter Lang, 2006). The strongest suggestion of the kind is likely to be found in Acts 26:18, where people (perhaps Gentiles specifically) are depicted as blind, in darkness, and under the domain of Satan; Nor does the notion of "conceptual equipment" imported from cognitive science satisfactorily explain misunderstanding in the narrative (Green, *Conversion*).

⁸ Evans, *To See and Not Perceive*, 46. Again, see discussion above in the exegetical analysis of the Parable of the Sower.

⁹ On this point, Bauspieß and Dillon strongly agree. Bauspieß, *Geschichte*; Dillon, *Eye-Witnesses*.

time demanding repentance from all people, including from those found guilty (by Luke) of Jesus' death (e.g., 2:23; 36; 3:14–15) and from pagans far from Jerusalem (17:23, 30)—*and in spite of* misdeeds done in ignorance (3:17; 17:23, 30).

A final point with regard to the hermeneutical implications of the rhetoric of perception for Luke's audience: Luke uses a handful of questionable characters as positive models of perception, including an unnamed blind beggar, an unnamed crucified criminal, an unnamed Ethiopian Eunuch, a Gentile Centurion named Cornelius, and a Gentile woman named Lydia. A rehearsal of their stories and their implications can be found above. To summarise, the audience might object to the credibility of these characters for various reasons. Yet Luke presents them as exemplary—recognising Jesus' identity as the Son of David in spite of blindness, trusting in Jesus' messianic identity *while* being crucified with him, having the courage to ask for help in understanding the Scriptures and being eager to obey, taking great measures in obedience to an angel and listening carefully thereafter, and upon converting, opening one's home to become a centre for missionary operations in Philippi. In these stories, the audience may well be left with some stereotypes shattered or perhaps be encouraged that they, like one of these characters, can also understand and bear witness.

Indeed, faithfulness to the mission is what the audience finds at the end of Acts: Paul, welcoming all and preaching the kingdom (28:30–31). Yet the ending is not uniformly positive in light of Acts 28:24–28, as was made clear in the previous chapter. So what finally is the audience to *do* with this conflicted ending? See and tell.¹⁰ As Alexander comments, "...Luke, writing in full awareness of the tragic

¹⁰ Recall Darr's suggestion that "Much of the rhetoric in Luke's narrative is designed to mold readers into ideal witnesses" (Darr, *On Character Building*, 147).

dimension of the story of Israel's rejection of the Gospel, invites the reader both to contemplate the tragedy for what it is and to read it as a warning of the possibility of having eyes, yet failing to 'see'."¹¹ Paul warns his audience in the synagogue at Antioch to 'see' (βλέπετε) the gospel he proclaims, lest the words from Habakkuk 1:5 be true of them: "See (ἴδετε) you scoffers, and marvel and be ruined; because I am performing a work in your days, a work which you will never believe (οὐ μὴ πιστεύσητε) even if someone describes it in detail (ἐκδιηγῆται)" (Acts 13:41). In Rome comes a similar description from another prophet: "... seeing, you will see (βλέψετε) and not perceive (ἴδητε)...they have closed their eyes..." (Acts 28:26–27; cf. Isaiah 6:9–10). Yet, like Peter who calls the house of Israel to "know for certain that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36), Luke has told his audience that he writes "...so that you will recognise the certainty concerning the things you have been instructed" (Luke 1:4). The audience has been further encouraged to emulate the faithful witnesses they encounter in the story, like those implied insiders of Luke's preface and like the apostles who 'cannot stop speaking' of what they have 'seen and heard' (Acts 4:20).

¹¹ Alexander, *Literary Context*, 226; Cf. Tannehill, "Israel."

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